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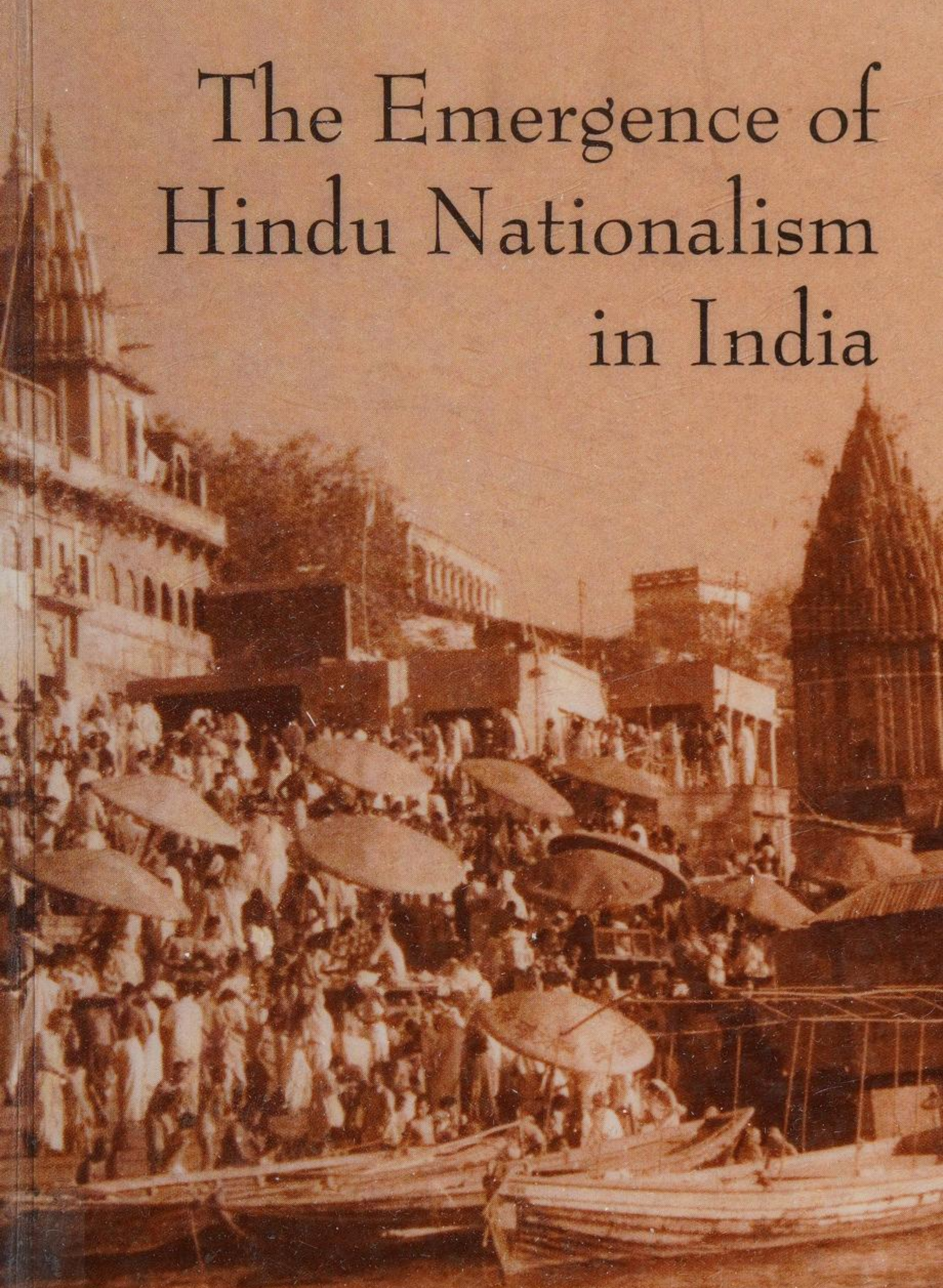
The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India



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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to all those who have given me advice and encouragement in the course of this project. In its early phase, I received valuable help in ordering my thoughts and drawing out ideas from Partha Mitter, Bruce Graham, Sudipta Kaviraj, Rohit Barot and Thomas Hansen. I would like to thank all of them for their time and interest. Later, I benefited particularly from the thoughtful comments of Christophe Jaffrelot on the direction and content of my work. These comments supplemented the inspiration I gained from Christophe's own work on Hindu nationalism and other matters, particularly his important book, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (Viking, Penguin India, Delhi, 1996). Christophe also gave me some valuable leads for my study trips to India, for which I am again most grateful.

Whilst in India, I benefited from close contact with the Centre for Historical Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. I am particularly indebted to Mridula and Aditya Mukherjee, and to Bipan Chandra, for all their help and kindness as well as their trenchant comments on my work. I would also like to thank Achin Vanaik for sharing his thoughts with me on the nature of communalism and religious nationalism. My approach to these and other issues was examined in fearful detail during long discussions with Eddie and Niva Rodrigues in Bombay. All thanks are due to them for making my time there so critical in terms of the overall direction of the work. Thanks also to Jitendra Nath, who helped me in so many ways whilst I was in Delhi, and whose sense of hospitality I will always cherish.

I am most grateful to Mohan Kadu for his help in translations from Marathi and his ability to 'go with the flow' whilst at Hedgewar Bhavan in Nagpur. I also thank Ramkrishna Prahlad Deo and Shrikant Joshi of the RSS for their assistance and kindness whilst I was in Nagpur, as well as all the *swayamsevaks* who agreed to talk to me about their early years in the Sangh. Many thanks also to Gita Saberwal, Deputy Director of the Archaeology, Archives and Museums Department in Bhopal.

Back in Bristol, I would like to thank Professor Ursula King for all her work on this project, and for the many kindnesses she has shown me along the way. I must also thank Dr Vernon Hewitt. His valuable comments have often given me the confidence to proceed, and his consistent willingness to go through my work has been nothing short of heroic. Lately I have also been much helped by the comments and advice of Dr Andrew Wyatt.

Much thanks also to Rukun Advani, Bela Malik, and Sourav Dutta of Oxford University Press in Delhi. Bela and Sourav have been the source of much reassurance; I thank them both for their patience and efficiency in dealing with the script and its author.

I am most grateful to the Humanities Research Board of the British Academy for funding the bulk of my research. In addition, I must thank the University of Bristol for funding part of the research, and the Spalding Trust for funding a much-needed second trip to gather data in India.

Finally, I must thank my family for supporting me, making me laugh, understanding the need for time, and all the other complexities and needs involved in this kind of work. More than anything else, they have never failed to put the whole project in real perspective. Thanks then to Niki, Callum and Isla, but especially to Christina. Because we have lived it together, I dedicate this work to you.

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Note on Orthography

In this book I have avoided the use of diacritical marks. Transliteration of words from Indian languages is indicated simply through italicization. The plural 's' is also italicized, as in *pandits, vyavasthas,* and so on. This follows a tradition pursued somewhat silently by writers more interested in clarity of presentation than in accuracy of pronunciation. In reproducing Indian words in Roman script I have tried to be consistently phonetic. However, as there are more sounds in, for example, Hindi than there are letters in the Roman script, this system has obvious limitations. Pronunciation may in most cases be checked by reference to R.L. Turner's *Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966). Proper names, either of people, organizations, or social groups (including the names of castes) have not been italicized. Thus, for example, organizations which in the late nineteenth century began to promote the idea of *sanatana dharma* as Hindu orthodoxy are known as Sanatana Dharma Sabhas. There are inevitable anomalies in any system of transliteration. I have tried to keep resulting misunderstandings to a minimum by relying on consistency of use, supplemented by a select glossary of Indian words.

1

Introduction: Situating the Ideology of Hindu Nationalism

Hindu nationalism has become a familiar feature of modern Indian politics. During the final two decades of the twentieth century in particular, it has established itself as a central idiom in the high politics of state power in the Republic, associated with the rise of certain parties and with the projection of certain visions of political development. It also comes with an array of emotive political and cultural associations: Hindutva, the saffron wave, the sangh parivar, majoritarianism, and perhaps more specifically pejorative, communalism and 'fundamentalism'. Despite its familiarity, however, and partly because of these emotive associations, the precise meaning of Hindu nationalism is rather difficult to pin down. It has emerged as a rather 'soft' concept in modern political discourse—subject to a variety of shifting meanings, and a matter of persistent dispute amongst politicians, academics and other cultural commentators. This book is an attempt to understand precisely how and why this soft concept has been able to progressively integrate itself into Indian political discourse. It will do so by examining its emergence as an ideological formation, a means by which social groups make sense of and operate in their social context.

Whilst acknowledging the prominence of Hindu nationalism over the past twenty years, then, my focus in examining the emerging ideology of the movement is on a much earlier period. Historical work on the Hindu nationalist phenomenon tends to look at the movement from the 1920s onwards. In particular, Christophe Jaffrelot's important recent study, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* which examines its development right up until the 1990s, takes 1925, the year in which the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was formed, as its starting point.[1]

What I am interested in, however, is the ideological developments over the previous half century which allowed for the emergence of this movement. On what basis did it emerge, even by the 1930s, as an ideological formation with enough historical and political resonance amongst a certain class of Hindus to challenge the ideology of composite national identity propagated by Indian nationalist leadership? In this sense the purpose of this study is to focus on the complex ideological developments which make up the 'prehistory' of the Hindu nationalist movement.

During the nineteenth century, intellectuals interested in social and political issues developed a set of ideas which have emerged as extremely influential in the formation of modern Hindu identities. I am thinking particularly of notions such as the 'Golden Age' of Vedic Hinduism, the Aryan race as the fundamental force that generated Hindu culture, the slow disintegration and eventual stagnation of that culture during the medieval period, and the related notions of forced conversion to Islam and destruction of Hindu temples as the defining events of that particular period. These ideas contributed a great deal to analyses of the predicament of India both as a subjugated land and as a force in the development of the modern world; as a result they were also influential in informing perceptions of what it meant to be a Hindu in this context.

A good deal of work has examined how these ideas were related to the presence of colonial power and to the operation of colonialist or orientalist discourse as a facet of this power.[2] This book demonstrates the way in which such ideas were compressed and channelled by one particular form of colonialist discourse, which I will call the discourse of organization. I will argue that the state projected a specific image of organization as a cultural language in its attempt to exert discursive dominance in India. Organization was expressed here as a discourse of modernity. Through this discourse, Hindus examined and debated the 'shape' of their religion and its objective existence in relation to other religions in the modern world. I want to argue that it was this process, carried out in particular arenas, which enabled Hindu nationalism to emerge in the early twentieth century as a distinctive and politically influential ideology.

The significance of this project stems from the earlier observation that Hindu nationalism has emerged as a 'soft' concept in modern political discourse. Its precise meanings and relationships as an ideology have become obscured by the complex and highly ideological course of India's political development in the late colonial and post-colonial period. In researching this book, I have been offered a whole range of meanings

for the concept; indeed, on several occasions I have been confronted with the proposition that my research topic does not exist at all. Despite causing me some measure of insecurity, this proposition was ultimately useful in enabling me to close in on the precise situation of the concept. Put briefly, what might be termed the denial argument suggests that using the term Hindu nationalism implicitly enables certain organizations to set the parameters of political debate. These organizations are rendered respectable by their association with that most central of concepts in modern Indian history—the concept of anti-colonial nationalism. In reality, the argument goes, it is only communalism—the mutual antagonism of different communities—that can adequately describe the projections of religious (or quasi-religious) identity which have come increasingly to dominate the political terrain in India.

The denial argument highlights a central problem. Hindu nationalism is a concept which is always already associated with this overarching, powerfully emotive idea of communalism. Historically, communalism has assumed the position of the very antithesis of Indian nationalism; the composite, universalist nationalism of the Freedom Movement, with its conception of a nation state constituted through individual citizenship. Because of this antithetical relationship, the conceptual marriage implied in the idea of Hindu nationalism does indeed appear misconceived. How can the concept of nationalism, after all, be equated with that of communalism, if the latter does constitute a threat to the idea of the nation?

The theoretical situation of Hindu nationalism is persistently compromised, then, by the dual operation of two key concepts: communalism and Indian nationalism. As Sumit Sarkar has recently pointed out, these two concepts have established a critical dialectic in modern Indian politics. This dialectic configures much of the debate over the nature of politics and the particular significance (or otherwise) of concepts such as Hindu nationalism.[3] The dialectic has a history which is now fairly well established in modern Indian historiography, locating the 1920s as the significant period of development. During this decade, communalism, or more specifically the communal riot, emerged as a systematic feature of political life in northern India.[4] This emergence was mirrored by the self-conscious articulation by Jawaharlal Nehru and others in the Indian National Congress of 'pure' nationalism, 'unsullied, in theory, by the "primordial" pulls of caste, religious community etc.'[5] These concurrent developments created a means of interpreting Indian politics and culture which has in many ways set the parameters of debate over issues such as secularity, national integration, the rights of minorities, and the nature of national identity.[6]

Thus although the straightforward characterization of communalism as a pre-modern reaction to nationalist modernity has been fairly comprehensively buried,[7] there is still a tendency to delineate a polar opposition between these two concepts—nationalism and communalism. In addition, Hindu nationalism very often becomes Hindu communalism in work which is otherwise rigorously formulated; Hindu nationalism is perceived as a form of contemporary communalism—another way, as it were, of saying Hindu communalism.[8] An association is established which situates Hindu nationalism as follows:

Communalism ⟷ (Indian) Nationalism
(inc. Hindu nationalism,
(i.e. as a form of communalism)

It may be a case of terminological slippage, but this implicit association with communalism underpins the polar opposition of Hindu nationalism to Indian nationalism, thus perhaps confirming the fears expressed in the denial argument. This argument is useful, then, precisely because it raises the question of whether there is a conceptual distinction to be made between Hindu nationalism and Hindu communalism, and if the answer is yes, how should Hindu nationalism then be situated in relation to Indian nationalism.

A key position to clarify in relation to these issues is the comparative status of the conceptual terms being used. A recent book by Peter van der Veer argues that communalism and nationalism are radical and moderate tendencies within the same ideology of nationalism. 'The moderates', he says, 'accept cultural pluralism and equality among different religious communities within the nation, while the radicals see the nation as the community of co-religionists.' It is all part of the same conception of nationalism, which for van der Veer is based on pre-colonial notions of religious community.[9] Here, then, the idea of Hindu nationalism as communalism is accommodated as a feature of a linear scale of moderate to radical nationalism. The two come together in the idea that communalism is 'only a form of nationalism (in which) a common religion...is imagined as the basis of group identity'. This form of nationalism is then placed at the other (radical) end of the scale from pluralist (moderate) nationalism. For van der Veer, then, nationalism and communalism can be seen as comparable sociological concepts. They occupy different points, but they are on the same scale. Despite its intention to break free of the problem of polarity, this model continues to articulate what is implicit in forms of analysis which identify the oppositional character of nationalism and communalism: namely that these are 'twin' concepts which can be compared like to like.

This comparability needs to be questioned. In his examination of communalism as a 'form of colonialist knowledge', Gyanendra Pandey has recognized a significant flexibility in the term communalism.[10] It is not, he says, a term specific to religiously configured communities. It has rather been applied to any form of community that displays an antagonistic stance towards another community, within a colonial or post-colonial context—religious, yes, but also linguistic and caste-based communities. This antagonism, it must be noted, is always directed primarily towards communities based on the same kind of signifier as their own. The other of the communalist, then, is a kind of conceptual echo: a linguistic communalist will direct his hostility towards another linguistic group; a religious communalist towards another religion, and so on. Achin Vanaik has argued that this kind of flexibility leads to a loss of focus, not to say rigour, in the term —it becomes too broad to be useful.[11] Rather than making the term too broad, however, my argument is that this flexibility strips the concept down to the level of a framework, narrowing rather than broadening its possibilities. Communalism emerges as a fairly stark and simple structure. It is defined first and foremost by an antagonism towards what is other than itself, and that other is principally some form of conceptual echo of itself. In this sense, the structure of the concept does not replicate the complex, multi-layered form of nationalism, and so cannot be seen as comparable. It is little more than this antagonistic alignment against its conceptual echo. Because of this simplicity, communalism does not necessarily generate its own ideology; it is more likely, in fact, to appropriate existing ideologies to extend its form and to deepen its impact.

This, I would say, is precisely the relationship between Hindu communalism and Hindu nationalism. The latter provides the ideological tools for the development and extension of the former. Let me make the distinction clear:

1. Hindu nationalism is defined as an ideology that seeks to imagine or construct a community (i.e. a nation) on the basis of a common culture—a culture configured by a particular notion of Hinduism, as I will go on to show in this book. This ideology, I would further suggest, was developed largely by middle class Indians, over a period coterminous with the development of elite-led Indian nationalist ideology.
2. Hindu communalism is a kind of discursive framework that aligns the interests—social, cultural, political, economic—of this imagined or constructed community precisely against the interests of other religious communities, particularly, of course, the Indian Muslims.

The distinction, then, is between the kind of concepts we are dealing with. Communalism and nationalism are not immediately comparable

as concepts, because communalism is more a historical condition than an ideology—it emerges as a means of channelling ideological forces towards particular objectives within the context of modern 'disenchantment'.[12] This distinction allows for the exploration of an ideological development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—that of Hindu nationalism—which is less teleologically burdened. As we have already noted, the 1920s constitute the point at which communalism is crystallized as a systematic feature of Indian politics, and the framework of polarization between Indian nationalism and communalism begins to emerge. What I am saying is that this crystallization does *not* constitute the culmination of a process of ideological development. It rather must be perceived as a process driven by the interplay of several historical factors, some of them ideological, but also others that were structural, 'event-led', and even external to indigenous politics. The ideology of Hindu nationalism was, of course, a major factor in the process of communalization, but its development *as an* ideology needs to be divorced from the process, as it had, and still has, its own existence separate from the structure of communalism.

If, then, we can think of Hindu nationalism as autonomous of communalism, we have to consider the issue of what kind of ideology it was. In particular, we need to consider the relationship between Hindu nationalism and Indian nationalism. Christophe Jaffrelot recognizes the emergence of Hindu nationalism as a distinct political ideology around the turn of the century in north and north-west India.[13] The development of this ideology constituted the first stage of what he calls the 'birthing process' of Hindu nationalism. The second stage, located in the 1920s, saw the emergence of Hindu nationalism as a form of political mobilization that drew on identity symbols provided by this ideology.[14] This would appear to be a model similar to that suggested here, in that Jaffrelot recognizes the existence of an apparently autonomous ideology that informs the mobilization of the 1920s. But Jaffrelot further theorizes his model, by placing it within the framework of ethnic nationalism. It is this ethnicity, he says, that distinguishes Hindu nationalism from the universalism of Indian nationalist ideology, with its projection of 'all individuals, all communities living within British India' as the nation.[15]

The framework of ethnicity obliges Jaffrelot to situate Hindu nationalism in relation to its attendant tensions: most notably the tension between primordialist and instrumentalist approaches to the development of ethnic movements. As a form of identity, Jaffrelot states that Hindu nationalism was not primordialist, drawing on an established sense of ethnicity; yet at the same time, it was not instrumentalist, a cynical

construction of the elite, because it does reinterpret themes drawn from the established tradition of Hinduism. Jaffrelot rather suggests the ideological construction of Hindu nationalism as a cultural strategy to defend brahmanical hegemony. This strategy was pursued by certain socio-religious reform organizations, particularly the Arya Samaj.[16] As it moves into its second stage of political mobilization, however, it is more straightforwardly interpreted as an instrumentalist movement driven by what he calls 'ideologically minded Hindu elites'.

To my mind, this projection of Hindu nationalist ideology as somehow structurally different because of its ethnic or cultural conception of the nation, is problematic. First, it leaves little room for the development of the culture of *Indian* nationalism—the latter is presented as a rather flat political nationalism that can have no influence over the development of an exclusivist, combative Hindu sense of ethnicity. This belies the increasing sophistication of Indian nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth century, and leads Jaffrelot to describe the extremist strategy of the Congress nationalists Tilak and Aurobindo as a product of their 'Hindu leanings'.[17] This kind of extremism, interestingly, is reminiscent of van der Veer's moderate-to-radical scale of nationalism. Second, Jaffrelot's emphasis on Hindu nationalism as a cultural strategy designed to defend brahmanic hegemony is particularly problematic in the context of the Arya Samaj, as in its early years around the turn of the century this organization was resolutely opposed by established Hinduism and the Brahmanic hegemony it is presented as defending.

But most significantly, although Jaffrelot presents Hindu nationalism as a distinct ideology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he nevertheless states that it was not 'codified' until the early 1920s. By this he means that it was not until this period that the ideology was consciously articulated, largely through the written work of V.D. Savarkar.[18] This codification constitutes the 'second stage' of the birth of Hindu nationalism, and although it is perceived as different, in that it represents a straightforward instrumentalist project of the elite, it is not perceived as a conceptual difference. Communalism emerges again as an 'extreme' form of Hindu nationalism, manipulated by certain 'ideologically minded Hindu elites'. It is the instrumentalism of these elites, furthermore, which is key to the development of this construct of Hindu nationalism as communalism. In this context the autonomous significance of the earlier form of the ideology as a cultural strategy—neither primordialist nor instrumentalist—begins to fade. It is teleologically bound to the elite-driven project of 1920s communalism. Here, the notion of ethnic nationalism locates its 'natural' situation, as an

ideology which underpins a violent and reactionary political force. We are back, as it were, where we started: with the polarization of (universalist) nationalism, and (ethnic) communalism, and the subsequent problem of how to conceptualize and distinguish Hindu nationalism as an ideology outside this dialectic.

The distinction between ethnic and universalist nationalism could refer us to Partha Chatterjee's critique of theories of nationalism, which demonstrates an orientalist imperative behind the identification of two 'types' of nationalism in this way.[19] Jaffrelot's notion of ethnic nationalism is also significant, however, because it draws on a particular conception of ideology, developed by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz perceives ideology as what he calls 'schematic images of social order'—symbols or metaphors—consciously constructed as a means of rationalizing change in a modernizing society.[20] Ideology, then, fulfils a specific function in this context; a function associated with the defence and modulation of social and cultural norms.[21] Despite his assertion that 'the function of ideology is to make an autonomous politics possible', Geertz is curiously reticent in defining its relationship to class—a point acknowledged by Jaffrelot[22]—and also to colonialism, even though much of his work draws on the ethnology of post-colonial South East Asia. What emerges from this approach is a restricted notion of ideology. It is perceived as a facet of culture, a reinterpretation appropriated as a means of establishing and defending that culture in the face of rapid change. In addition, the significance of issues of class, colonialism, and indeed caste in this context is fenced in by the conscious instrumentalism of particular social groups.

An alternative approach would be to refer to the wider conception of ideology developed by Gramsci, and the extension of his work, particularly in relation to culture, by Stuart Hall. Here, ideology can be resituated in a far more strategic relation to culture itself. Ideology, Hall states, constitutes the '"mental frameworks"...the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.'[23]

The fundamental position that ideology assumes here in relation to people's perception of the world means that far from being an aspect of culture, ideology is a means through which culture is defined. What is perceived as culture is dependent upon the dominance of particular ideologies. In this book it will be demonstrated how the ideology of Hindu nationalism emerged coterminous with that of elite-led Indian nationalism, occupying and struggling over the same discursive terrain,

including the terrain of culture. Culture, then, becomes one means through which the ideology of Hindu nationalism articulates itself against the cultural projections of Indian nationalism. As we shall see, it was by no means the only area of struggle between these two.

Despite the context of struggle, however, these ideologies were not burdened by the historical necessity of overt and implacable opposition; they competed precisely on this level of 'mental frameworks'. This is evident, for example, in the work of V.D. Savarkar, Swami Shraddhanand, and Lajpat Rai: all three of these 'architects' of Hindu nationalism had been in prison because of their activities as Indian nationalists, and all were perceived as—and perceived themselves as—genuine Indian nationalists during the 1920s. By employing Geertz's perception of ideology as restricted, it may be possible to present this apparent paradox as symptomatic of figures who were Hindu nationalists in cultural terms and Indian nationalists in political terms. My argument suggests that examples of almost simultaneous expression of the competing ideologies simply reflect the struggle for dominance of these 'mental frameworks' on the discursive terrain of middle class Indian public life.[24] The proximity of these ideologies meant that they blended and clashed frequently in both cultural and political contexts.

These were ideologies, then, which developed coterminously as middle class ideologies. Middle class, that is, in the sense identified by B.B. Mishra: not a class emerging out of technological or industrial development, as it had, for example, in Britain, but a predominantly professional class, emerging out of 'educational, judicial and administrative development under colonial rule'.[25] Mishra notes that although 'intermediate' classes emerged in industrial and landed sectors in the first century of British rule (p.106), it was 'lawyers, and public servants, doctors and teachers, writers, scholars and members of other recognized professions' who developed a 'common interest and outlook, a common language and behaviour pattern'. In short, this heterogeneous group became a self-conscious middle class, consolidating itself particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century, through a variety of channels.[26]

Mishra's citing of educational, judicial and administrative development as critical in the process of consolidation emphasizes the proximity of this class to the structures of colonial rule. Just how it was associated with this rule, however, has been a matter of some debate. The key problem here for recent historiography has been the operation of hegemony as a feature of the colonial state. This Gramscian concept articulates a mechanism of discursive dominance over the whole complex of social relations in a given societal formation. Discursive dominance is

maintained principally through the ability of the state to 'permeat(e) all forms of organisations and mass consciousness and provok(e) a "diffusion of hegemony" at all levels of society'.[27] This does not, however, mean the mute acceptance of state control throughout society—various writers have emphasized the existence of hegemony as an area of struggle, an area where the dynamic ideologies of different social blocs fight for popular consent.[28] The state is nevertheless the most powerful player in this area of struggle, because of the extent of its material structure.

For Indian historiography there is a dilemma with this model. The idea of discursive dominance is significant because of its post-orientalist associations. Hegemony provides a framework for the articulation of orientalist knowledge as power. But the idea of the colonial state as 'permeating...all levels of society' is highly questionable. The colonial state is rather perceived as a state based on coercion; the structure of authority is characterized precisely by dominance without hegemony. This argument has been put forward particularly by Ranajit Guha, in a significant contribution to the Subaltern Studies series, and also by Sudipta Kaviraj.[29] In constructing his framework for the articulation of power in colonial society, Guha lays primary emphasis on the operation of state coercion. As Vasudha Dalmia has pointed out, however, there is at least an 'aspiration' to hegemony in the projection of persuasion as a feature of the dominant (colonialist) discourse.[30] The principle of hegemony is admitted, even if its actual implementation by the colonial state is perceived as extremely limited. 'Liberal culture', Guha states, 'hardly *managed to penetrate* beyond the upper crust of Indian society, while the ideal of liberal government *persisted* only as an idle and empty cant until the end of the Raj'.[31] These comments, then, acknowledge the existence of a hegemonic project, even if this existence is characterized as specious. Guha goes on to produce a rasping critique of 'neo-colonialist' historiography on the basis of its projection of this thin sliver of 'liberal culture' as a solid basis for hegemonic government, operating through a network of vertically mobilized collaborators. Here, curiously, hegemony is presented almost as a liberal panacea in opposition to coercion, rather than the complementary mechanism of discursive dominance noted in Gramsci. Kaviraj appears to note this point in his observation that the polarization of coercion and hegemony in some modern historiography renders hegemony 'an ahistorical taxonomic device'—i.e. any political state of affairs which is not coercive must therefore be hegemonic, and vice versa. Rightly, he explains that the Gramscian concept is far more subtle, and constitutes a 'deeply historically indexed' model for state–society relations. Precisely because of this

historical indexing, however, Kaviraj is reluctant to transplant hegemony from its context of high capitalism; 'it must be resistant', he says, 'to an easy shift to an explanation of imperial hegemony, except in some limited and specific ways'.[32]

It is these 'limited and specific ways' which lead us back to the middle class. Because of the alien nature of the regime, Kaviraj states, colonial rule was unable to penetrate the complex tissue of Indian culture; its primary means of control, therefore, was through the 'forcible integration of the segmentary productive regimes of rural India into an integrated economy'.[33] But again this is not to say that the colonial state did not have a hegemonic arrangement—indeed, Kaviraj suggests that such an arrangement was inevitable, because ultimately the ruling class was a part of the bourgeois political order in Europe. But it was limited in its effect to the new middle class, who 'related themselves to imperial authority in a way reminiscent of the typical hegemonic construction'. This middle class failed the state in that it was unable to transmit hegemony, through a 'trickle down' process, to the myriad forms of subaltern class discourse.

Two points should be made on the basis of Kaviraj's argument here. First, despite his position in relation to hegemony in India, Kaviraj notes that the state *had* to have a hegemonic arrangement, because ultimately it was configured by a political formation (i.e. British capitalist democracy) with hegemony at its heart. Here stands a case for the theoretical accommodation of hegemony on its own.[34] Despite making the point, however, Kaviraj is reluctant to use the term owing to what he perceives as the failure of state hegemony to succeed in India. In a sense, however, this is beside the point. If the state is configured in this way, it must be considered as a feature of the socio-political terrain. This is particularly so, of course, in the context of elite-led Indian nationalism and its position vis-à-vis the state, but it is also true of other forms of socio-political discourse.

This leads us to the second point to be drawn from Kaviraj's argument. Hegemony may be admitted in an Indian context, he says, but only in as much as it affected the middle class. This form of hegemony is reminiscent of what has been identified as 'minimal hegemony' in Gramsci's work.[35] Here, hegemony is extended only to the economic, political, and intellectual elite, whilst maintaining principally coercive control over the mass of the population. Whereas Gramsci recognizes this strategy as class alliance, however, Kaviraj is suggesting not so much an alliance as a structural limitation, born of the alien nature of the state—its inability to penetrate indigenous culture. Again, this is

perceived as a 'failure' of the state's hegemonic project—a failure brokered, however, by the colonial middle class. As in so much recent historiography, this perception is too ready to dismiss the significance and power of the middle class in colonial society. Recent emphasis on subaltern movements has re-focused historiographical lenses on moments of history outside the straightforward narrative of the middle class, male-dominated national movement, on to the 'real' history of India under colonial rule, the history of popular movements and popular discourse. Welcome though this shift is, it has tended to obscure the vitality of the colonial middle class and its fascinating position in the complex of colonial power. The hegemonic project of the state may well be perceived as limited and a 'failure' in the context of colonial society as a whole, but there is certainly a strong argument for its significance as a feature of colonial rule, precisely because of the critical position of this middle class.[36] In particular, the middle class was in the privileged position of being able to accommodate and manipulate the language of colonial power; it is this language, as Haynes points out in his argument for colonial cultural hegemony, which 'supplies the categories, grammar, and principles through which political assertions are articulated and perceived.... It defines the terrain of political debate, including some matters as legitimate points of discussion and excluding others.'[37]

The key site of this engagement between the middle class and the cultural hegemony of the state is what may be termed the civic or public space of colonial politics. A variety of historians and political scientists have referred to some form of public terrain as pivotal in Indian socio-political life during the colonial period.[38] Most draw on the notion of public sphere formulated by Jurgen Habermas in the context of bourgeois Europe. Habermas' public represented the people in a kind of intermediary role, independent of state authority. The public emerges here as a central feature of functioning democracy, 'the people organised as a discursive and decision making public'.[39] The public space to which I will be referring has in many ways a far more limited scope than this. Although many of the institutions of the public space—the press, the law courts, petitions and memorials, the actions and policies of legally constituted organizations—reflect a similar institutional base to Habermas' public sphere functioning in the political realm, the ability of these institutions to express themselves freely in the context of colonial control was severely limited. The colonial public space was an area over which the state attempted to wield self-conscious authority—widening or narrowing the space, changing its shape in various areas as it saw fit, and according to what it perceived as the responsibility of those who

used it.[40] In addition, the impact of such institutions on colonial society was also limited by the isolating imperatives of colonial hegemony. As Haynes has pointed out, the limited character of hegemony meant that for most people 'the politics of the civic arena were governed by principles and lines of debate that were baffling, to say the least'.[41]

Despite its limitations, however, there is one sense in which the public space was startlingly broad. It was a cross-regional space, in which ideologies could have an impact across colonial India. Movements or events centred in Punjab or Bengal, for example, had direct significance across the country. As we shall see, they continually prompted responses within the public space from individuals and groups in unrelated areas. It is for this reason that, although there is a measure of regional focus in this study, in that a good deal of evidence has been collected from Nagpur, the administrative centre of the Central Provinces from 1861, it is a decidedly loose focus. Nagpur is of course significant as the city in which one of the principal organizational forms of Hindu nationalism—the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)—was established. This is particularly interesting, because Nagpur had neither a significant Muslim minority, a history of strong regional identities, nor the presence of an influential elite-based socio-religious reform movement to encourage the development of Hindu nationalist ideas. In addition, there was no marked tension between Hindus and Muslims before the 1920s.[42] What it did have, however, was a strong, predominantly high caste middle class. A quarter of Central Provinces and Berar graduates lived and worked in Nagpur, servicing the key educational, judicial, and administrative institutions of the region.[43] The Nagpur middle classes formulated ideologies on the basis of the cross-regional concerns of their class—including those about the organization of their religion—precisely because of their position as prime movers in the public space. This position enabled them to engage actively with occurrences and issues across British India and beyond, through petitions and memorials, discussion in recognized organizations, literary comment, and particularly, of course, through newspapers.[44]

As well as this cross-regional potential, the public space was a significant area for the development of indigenous critiques of colonial control. In particular, it provided the opportunity for the expression of autonomous ideologies in an arena where the project of colonial hegemony was most forcefully launched by the state. As noted above, hegemony needs to be recognized as both limited and a site of struggle. The public space constituted a consistent domain for the articulation of this limited struggle. Members of the middle class came progressively to use their privileged

position in this arena to translate and transform, unpick and subvert the mechanics of colonial discourse. An example of this intervention is provided by the state's attempts to codify religion and caste through the census. As shall be seen in Chapter 3, setting the boundaries of Hinduism was a consistent problem for colonial officials in this exercise, particularly in terms of situating low castes and tribal groups in relation to the religion. A major element of this problem was the propensity of enumerators to make their own judgements on the issue. The Report on the 1881 Census, for example, complained that

> many of the more bigoted high caste Hindoos employed as census enumerators or supervisors objected to record such low persons as of the Hindoo religion. This was illustrated by numerous instances brought to my notice of such persons having been recorded as of the Dher, Mang or Chandal religion by mere repetition of their caste in the column for religion. Possibly some in their humility and ignorance may not even have claimed to be of the Hindoo religion. More probably they were not even asked.[45]

Here, then, the acquisition of colonial knowledge was disrupted by the intervention of a self-confidently independent understanding ('bigoted' or otherwise) of the field. The census enumerators—mostly school teachers and other local professionals, archetypal members of the middle class[46]—sought to integrate their own mental frameworks into colonial discourse. As O'Hanlon has pointed out, such interventions demonstrate that 'the seemingly omnipotent classifications of the Orientalist were vulnerable to purposeful misconstruction and appropriation to uses which he never intended, precisely because they had incorporated into them the readings and the political concerns of his native informants'.[47] In this sense, then, the public space must be located as an area of ideological struggle, where colonial discourse was subjected to the scrutiny and interpretation of middle class mental frameworks.

At the same time, however, the middle classes acted as mediators of this discourse for the benefit of non-elite classes in the public space. Again, Haynes is instructive here. 'Non-elites', he says, 'had to rely upon symbolic specialists to mediate between themselves and the civic domain; they could not participate in the public arena directly'.[48] Of particular interest in the present context is their mediation of the key colonial discourse of organization. I want to argue that the state persistently projected organization as a key facet of colonial modernity—it was a means of articulating power, in that the projected organization of the state was contrasted to the supposed disorganization of society. This projection of organization had critical implications for modes of articula-

tion in the public space. Ideas about organization not only informed the status of Societies, Sabhas and Samajes as appropriate platforms for addressing the state on issues of what was increasingly declared to be 'public interest'; they also enabled such bodies to project themselves as representative of that public whose interest they invoked. A Sabha that petitioned the government on the legality of beef sales in a particular market, then, did so on the basis that its view was representative of a particular constituency. The Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha, for example, which petitioned the Government of India in July 1894 on the issue of cow protection, did so on behalf of 'the inhabitants of Nagpur and the adjoining districts'.[49] The Sabha—a self-appointed collection of lawyers, bankers, landowners, and the like—could not seriously claim to stand for such a wide constituency, but the accuracy of representative claims was not the point. The idea of representation was necessary in order to legitimize the claims of the Sabha, to give them meaning, within the public space. It is in this sense that I am referring to organization as a discourse: a means through which issues, claims—the putative expression of the people's interests and, increasingly, their 'rights'—are given meaning within the public space of colonial India.

The idea of a discourse of organization is presented as configured by the hegemonic arrangement of the colonial state. As such it is not a static concept: it developed historically, and increasingly became a site of struggle as the power and sophistication of Indian nationalism was extended around the turn of the century. It may be defined consistently, however, as the accepted or recognizable way of 'being public' within the parameters of the public space. For overtly political organizations like the Congress, of course, this also meant the way of 'being political' in the public space. Increasingly, this political implication was also to become central to the alignment of religious organizations in this context.

The imbrication of this discourse of organization with the articulation of the Hindu religion will be examined at two broad and interrelated levels: first, at the level of political mobilization—the way in which Hindus became organized as a political force in colonial India; and second, at the level of religious imperatives—the way in which organization came to be seen as an ideal to which Hindus could and should aspire, precisely because they were Hindus. At both levels, the protagonists were forced to confront the question of what constituted Hinduism: what were its defining characteristics, and where were its boundaries located? Because of this overarching question, the two levels developed together, mutually informing debate and development in the area of organization. In the 1920s, this process produced the conscious articula-

tion of *sangathan,* organization as both a religious and a political movement.

The *sangathan* movement of the mid-1920s was intimately linked to the ascendance of the Hindu Mahasabha as a political force and the so-called Malkana *shuddhi* campaign to reconvert nominal Muslims in western United Provinces. In this context, the *sangathan* movement was articulated as a means of consolidating Hindu society, of unifying Hinduism, in response to the perceived unity of Indian Muslims.[50] *Sangathan* was generally popularized by the Hindu Mahasabha at this time, and in particular it was spelt out as a programme of development by the Arya Samajist Swami Shraddhanand.[51] In history and political science literature, accounts of the movement generally trace its roots to the emergence of the Sabha movement in the Punjab in the first decade of the twentieth century.[52] Although it will be illustrated that this Sabha movement was influential in the development of *sangathan,* I want to integrate this as part of a more long-term development of the idea in both religious and political terms.

Sangathan is derived from the Sanskrit prefix *sam,* 'together', and the verbal root *ghat,* 'to form or mould'.[53] This is evident in the more strict Sanskritic use of *sanghatan,* 'organization, formation, constitution, composition'.[54] In its more general Hindi form—*sāṅgaṭhan*—which will be adhered to in this book, it is translated as '(the act or process of) organization (or an organized body or system or society)'.[55] A review of religious studies literature reveals that it is not recognized as a significant feature of Hinduism.[56] This lack of treatment suggests that, if indeed the idea of organization that *sangathan* denotes can be established as a central feature of Hindu nationalist ideology, it was not derived from traditional forms of religiosity, and further that the structure of Hindu nationalism was not based on recognizable institutions in Hinduism.[57] Where organization is discussed as a feature of modern Hinduism, it is often strongly linked to the reform movements, especially the Arya Samaj, and through these, to the influence of Christianity.[58] Again, although these were undoubtedly important influences, I want to argue that it was organization as a colonial discourse which caused a critical shift in perceptions of what it meant to be a Hindu, and provided the opportunity for the development of the ideology of Hindu nationalism.

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The book begins by looking at the context of colonialism in the nineteenth century, and the emergence of organizations that sought to represent Hinduism within this context. Chapter 2 examines the way in which organization as a feature of British power was expressed as a cultural

force in Indian society, and the impact of this force on representations of Hinduism. Chapter 3 focuses on the development of ideas of organization in both Hindu and Indian nationalist contexts. This dual focus is a logical implication of the definition of Hindu and elite-led Indian nationalism as middle class ideologies following similar patterns of development, strongly influenced by the colonial discourse of organization. Chapter 4 extends this analysis by examining developments in the first decade of the twentieth century. It argues that this was a particularly critical phase in the formulation of Hindu nationalism, precisely because of the upheavals apparent in the Indian nationalist movement at this time, and the ways in which the state sought to marginalize the development of a nationalist strategy of counter-hegemony. Chapter 5 examines political and ideological developments after the First World War and in the early 1920s. In this complex arena, it concentrates on two issues of particular relevance to the development of Hindu nationalism: the emergence of a new discourse of organization in Indian politics, as a result of the extension of the strategy of counter-hegemony by the Congress under Gandhi's leadership; and the entrenchment of Hindu identity as a feature of middle class politics, largely in response to the communalization of politics on a wider plane during this period. These developments provide the context for the development of the Hindu nationalist movement in the 1920s, which forms the focus of Chapter 6. This chapter analyses the concept of *sangathan* as employed by various proponents of Hindu nationalism, and the extent of its integration with ideas of the organization of Hinduism identified in earlier chapters. It then looks at the elaboration of Hindu nationalism in institutional terms, focusing on the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. I will argue that these two organizations constitute very different approaches to the ideal of *sangathan,* and that this difference is indicative of the eclectic ideological positions and formations which consistently informed the articulation of Hinduism in colonial politics.

Source material for this book has been collected both in the UK and India. A great deal of evidence has been gathered from newspapers, and provincial government weekly reviews of the regional press. The published writings of various individuals have also been studied in some depth: for example, those of Swami Shraddhanand and V.D. Savarkar, and also a section of the copious writings of M.K. Gandhi. In addition, private papers have assisted in explaining ideological positions; in particular, I have used the diary of B.S. Moonje, and the letters of K.B. Hedgewar in this regard. I have also been fortunate enough to be able to interview certain people involved in the developing Hindu nationalist

movement in Nagpur in the 1920s. These interviews did not follow a set pattern dictated by a pre-arranged sequence of questions. Rather, they were discussions guided by the parameters of my research topic, which I explained to interviewees prior to conducting the interview. The principal objective of interviews was presented as the construction of a picture of the status of Hindu nationalist ideology in the city at this time, and its relationship with Indian nationalist politics. I have also examined government records in Nagpur, Bhopal, Delhi, and London, mostly as a means of gaining background information on relevant organizations and movements.

Notes

1. Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India 1925 to the 1990s* (Viking, Penguin India, New Delhi, 1996).
2. See, for example, R. Inden, *Imagining India* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990); V. Dalmia and H. von Stietencron (eds), *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity* (Sage, New Delhi, 1995), esp. pts 1 & 2; P. van der Veer and C. Breckenridge (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1993); G. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered* (Manohar, Delhi, 1997). Note also Sarkar's comment on this area: 'it is important...to avoid bland, mechanistic depictions of the impact of late-colonial integration or of colonial discourse. Such depictions had been the pitfalls of much modernization theory, and one feels at times that the Saidian counterorthodoxy of today has run into similar problems through an inversion of values that retains implicit assumptions of passivity among the colonised'. Sumit Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva' (in D. Ludden (ed.), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 270–93: p. 279.
3. See Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva', p. 270–71.
4. In 1931, a Congress enquiry listed a total of forty-three major riots since 1921. See *Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee Report,* reprinted in N.G. Barrier (ed.), *Roots of Communal Politics* (Heinemann, New Delhi, 1976), p. 228.
5. G. Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1990), p. 235. Pandey gives numerous

examples of the articulation of this kind of nationalism in opposition to communalism, see pp. 235–243.

6. See, for example, Ayesha Jalal's key interpretative dialectics between centralism and regionalism and nationalism and communalism, as employed in her *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), and *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995).
7. For communalism as a facet of modernity, as well as comment on other writers on the concept, see R.G. Fox, 'Communalism and Modernity', in Ludden, *Contesting the Nation,* pp. 335–49. See also A. Vanaik, *The Furies of Indian Communalism: Religion, Modernity and Secularization* (Verso, London, 1997), esp. Chapter 2, 'Reflection on Communalism and Nationalism in India'.
8. Vanaik notes the pitfalls of this approach when he acknowledges in *The Furies of Indian Communalism* that whereas in previous work he was willing 'to adopt the term "Hindu nationalist" as an adequate characterisation of Hindu communal forces', he now sees the latter as a 'deeper and wider phenomenon'. (See p. 204, n. 161.) His careful distinctions nevertheless still allow for communalism as a kind of extreme form of Hindu nationalism, 'the most vicious form of it going in India'.
9. Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994), pp. 22–3.
10. See Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism,* pp. 6–7; whilst he does refer to Pandey's identification of communalism as an 'orientalist term', produced as a form of orientalist knowledge, van der Veer does not pursue the argument around flexibility.
11. See Vanaik, *The Furies of Indian Communalism,* p. 196.
12. As in Weber's process of disenchantment associated with the spread of modernity. Fox has used this model to argue for communalism as a 'new enchanted identity' created by modernity—a process, as he calls it, of 'hyperenchantment'. See his 'Communalism and Modernity', pp. 237–8.
13. As well as *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* see also his articles 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building', in *Economic and Political Weekly,* March 1993, vol. 20, nos. 12–13, pp. 517–24; and 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism in the Punjab: From the Arya Samaj to the Hindu Sabha (1875–1910)', in *Indo-British Review,* 1993, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 3–39.
14. On this process, see particularly 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism'.
15. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 19.
16. Ibid., p. 13: 'Hindu nationalism...largely reflects the Brahminical view

of the high caste reformers who shaped its ideology'; see also 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism', pp. 3–7.

17. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 17–18.
18. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 25.
19. See Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Zed Books, London, 1986), Chapter 1.
20. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (Fontana, London, 1993), pp. 218–19.
21. See also L. A. Fallers, 'The Establishment and Defence of Patterns of Belief and Culture', quoted in Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p.12.
22. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India:* 'neither Geertz (nor Fallers) places sufficient emphasis on the social background of the reinterpreters who shape ideologies'.
23. Hall, 'The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees', in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (Routledge, London, 1996), p. 26.
24. Gramsci's materialist interpretation of ideology meant that he always presented it as a concept associated with historical moments in the political process, a process necessarily defined by the antagonism of social formations (classes or class alliances). In this sense ideology can only be made sense of, be meaningful, if it is situated in its historical terrain—a terrain defined by class relations. This historically defined dynamism means that classes can easily be cross-cut by a series of conflicting ideologies, reflecting the conflict of perceived interests at any given moment. See ibid., p. 42.
25. B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* (Oxford University Press, London, 1961), p. 307.
26. Ibid., p.106. For an example of consolidation during this period, see Dalmia's account of the development of a middle class ethos in different literary genres during the 1870s. Dalmia, *Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth Century Benaras* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997), pp. 251–67.
27. C. Mouffe, 'Gramsci Today', in Mouffe (ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist Theory,* (Routledge, London, 1979), pp. 1–18: p. 5.
28. See, for example, S. Hall, 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity', in Morley and Chen, *Stuart Hall,* pp. 411–40: p. 425; D. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991), pp. 13–14.
29. R. Guha, 'Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography', in Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies VI* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989, pp. 210–309); S. Kaviraj, 'On the Construction of Colonial Power: Structure, Discourse, Hegemony', in Marks and Engels (eds), *Contesting*

Colonial Hegemony in Africa and India (British Academic Press, London, 1994), pp. 19–54.

30. Dalmia, *Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions*, p. 14.
31. Guha, 'Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography', pp. 289–90 (emphasis added).
32. Kaviraj, 'On the Construction of Colonial Power', p. 52.
33. Ibid., p. 53.
34. And indeed a more convincing argument than the idea that hegemony was an 'objective necessity', because of the sheer size of the subordinate population in relation to the ruling class. Kaviraj himself indicates this: 'Early nationalist writers often wondered how a large society like "India" could be colonized and held by such a small group of British people. ...The simple answer to the puzzle...was that of course there was no pre-existing India which was conquered by British rule.' See 'On the Construction of Colonial Power', p. 32.
35. Gramsci had developed the concept in the context of the *Risorgimento*, where 'the hegemony of the moderates extended only to other sections of their own bourgeois class...(and) never managed to reach down to the masses and construct a truly national community.' J. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981), p. 47.
36. A similar argument has been advanced by Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India*, pp. 13–16.
37. Ibid., p. 22.
38. See, for example, S. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Oxford University Press, 1990), esp. pp. 177–96; P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-colonial Histories* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993), see esp. pp. 74–5; T. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), esp. pp. 185-99; Kaviraj, 'On the Construction of Colonial Power', p. 34; Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India*, esp. pt. 1.
39. C. Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1995), p. 241; on the relationship between the state, public sphere, and the people, see J. Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeios Society* (MIT, Cambridge Massachusets, 1989), pp. 27–30.
40. As Metcalf points out (*Ideologies of the Raj*, p. 187), 'By creating channels through which the Indian "public" could make itself heard, the state set itself up as the sole arbiter of which public discourse was legitimate, and which illegitimate.' This is most aptly illustrated by the history of press regulation in India—the way in which repression was periodically used as a means of controlling the thrust of press comment. It is also evident in the manner in which petitions and memorials were rigidly formularized,

and subjected to rigorous vetting and arbitrary re-routing according to the interpretation of colonial officials.

41. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India,* p. 15.
42. See *Central Provinces District Gazetteers, Nagpur District,* A volume (1908) pp. 312–13. The only riots noted in the city were related to the introduction of plague measures in the 1890s.
43. See D. Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province: The Central Provinces and Berar 1919–1939* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1979), p. 20.
44. On newspapers and the formation of identity, See B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, London, 1991), pp. 33–36.
45. *Report on the Census of British India taken on 17 February 1881,* vol. I (HMSO, London 1883), p. 17. This source will be referred to hereafter as *Census of India 1881,* vol. I, India.
46. It should be noted that the position of census enumerator was a voluntary one; it was therefore limited to those literate Indians with enough leisure to devote time to this activity, and also those with a sense of the value of the census as a feature of administrative order.
47. R. O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 22, 1988, pp. 189–224: p. 217. A similar point is brought out by Christopher Bayly in his *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1780–1870* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996); hegemony, he says, was 'never absolute', and the creation of colonial knowledge must be seen as a 'dialogic process' (p. 370).
48. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India,* p. 15.
49. Home Department Public, July 1894, 'A' Proceedings (hereafter A Progs), no. 302, National Archives of India (hereafter abbreviated as NAI).
50. As Mushirul Hasan has pointed out, the 'organic' unity of Indian Islam was very much a fabricated image—Indian Muslims were at this time subject to numerous divisions; see his *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India 1885–1930* (Manohar, New Delhi, 1991), pp. 12–13.
51. Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan—Saviour of the Dying Race* (Arjun Press, Delhi, 1926); this was followed a little later by Bhai Parmanand's *Hindu Sangathan* (Central Hindu Yuvak Sabha, Lahore, 1936).
52. See Indra Prakash, *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement* (Akhil Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha, Delhi, 1938); J.T.F. Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda: His Life and Causes* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981), p.135; G.R. Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923–1928* (Brill, Leiden, 1975),

p. 159; Jaffrelot, 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building'.

53. See R.L. Turner, *Comparative Dictionary of the Indo–Aryan Languages,* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966), pp. 237, 746. The conjunction is evident, for example, in *samghaṭayati,* 'joins together', and *samghāṭa,* 'fitting and joining of timber'. I am grateful to Dr Rupert Gethin for drawing my attention to this point.
54. See M. Chaturvedi and B.N. Tiwari, *A Practical Hindi–English Dictionary* (National Publishing House, Delhi, 1970), p. 641. This form is employed by V.D. Savarkar and Indra Prakash in the latter's *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha.* Also, this was explained to me in an interview as the correct Sanskrit pronunciation by the RSS *swayamsevak* and Sanskrit scholar Dr S.B. Warnekar; interview conducted 22 April 1996.
55. Chaturvedi and Tiwari, *A Practical Hindi–English Dictionary,* p. 640.
56. Organization as a feature of Indian religious tradition is associated more with the Buddhist and Jain notions of *sangha,* 'any number of people living together for a certain purpose, a society, association, company, community', especially in terms of a monastic order or sect. See Monier–Williams, *A Sanskrit–English Dictionary* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1899), p. 1129. Neither Monier–Williams nor the following works mention the idea of *sangathan:* J.L. Brockington, *The Sacred Thread: Hinduism in its Continuity and Diversity* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1981); K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989); J.J. Lipner, *Hindus: Their Beliefs and Practices* (Routledge, London, 1994); K.M. Sen, *Hinduism* (Penguin, London, 1961); R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966).
57. This point, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, counters the argument of some non-religious studies literature that the RSS was modelled on Hindu notions of the 'sect' and asceticism; see Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 35–45, and 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building', pp. 521–2.
58. A recent example is provided by H. von Stietencron, 'Religious Configurations in Pre-Muslim India and the Modern Concept of Hinduism', in Dalmia and von Stietencron, *Representing Hinduism,* pp. 51–81: p. 79; see also D. Gold, 'Organised Hinduisms: From Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation' (in M. Marty and R. Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms Observed,* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994), pp. 531–593: p. 533.

2

The State and the Hindu Religion in the Nineteenth Century

The development of the colonial state in India was a gradual process, characterized by trial and error. The East India Company had a clear enough objective—profit—but its approach was tempered by a hypersensitivity towards local social and commercial relations. Initially, this was due to the concern that the disruption of these relations may affect the ability of the Company to extract profit. As one scholar has commented, 'for the British it was clear that an orderly marketplace was an issue of primary importance'.[1] From the 1780s onwards, however, the power of the Company was gradually curtailed by the British state. The activities of the Company became more and more subject to the scrutiny of liberal forces within the British establishment; forces which were determined to enforce the already extant view that the role of the British in India was primarily to improve the lot of the indigenous, 'heathen' population.[2]

The ensuing debate between liberal and conservative forces within the British establishment was underpinned by specific conditions of possibility, created by the growing realization of the strength of British power in India. By the turn of the century, this fact was keenly felt by colonial officials. H. Straching, for example, Judge and Magistrate in Midnapore, writes in 1802 that 'the power of the Bengal Government appears to me, of all governments, the most unquestionably despotic over its subjects. The submission of the natives is perfect and unqualified; so complete as to preclude the necessity of concern or intimidation of any kind.'[3] The underlying feeling, therefore, is one of 'unquestionable despotism', leading to an increasingly confident attitude towards Indian society and the possibility of intervention within it.[4] The demand for

the implementation of liberal ideologies from the metropolis could only come as a result of the manifestation of this power within India.

What, then, was the impact of this manifestation of power on colonial society? The conception of Hinduism as a religion was an area in which the power of the emerging state was undoubtedly influential.[5] As Romila Thapar comments, 'Hinduism of the pre-modern period was...not a uniform monolithic religion, but a juxtaposition of flexible religious sects.'[6] During the nineteenth century, however, movements towards the articulation of Hinduism as a single religious tradition, to be compared with other 'World Religions', are clearly evident.[7] Certain elements of 'Western culture'—notably Christianity and rationalism—are often presented as agents in the development of these movements, although the processes through which this kind of cultural interaction occurred are still a matter of debate.[8] My objective in this chapter is, in a sense, to divert attention from this direct correlation between explicit cultural forces and new departures in the signification of Hinduism. I will concentrate instead on the manifestation of colonial power as a cultural force in itself. In particular, ideas about organization, and the way in which the colonial state was organized in relation to society, operated as a central theme of this cultural force. The theme of organization developed in the second half of the nineteenth century into an important discourse in the articulation of colonial power. It is in this context that organization was to emerge as a critical element in the representation of Hinduism as a single religious tradition.

The Organization of the State and the Disorganization of Society

How, then, was this theme of organization brokered by the state? In the first part of this chapter I want to consider ways in which images of organization and disorganization articulated the cultural power of the state in Indian society. Images of organization can be associated with the elements of state which effectively delivered the British challenge in this domain of culture; images of disorganization can be associated with elements of society which were perceived as definitive or essential to Indian culture. Hinduism, as a religious tradition and force in state–society relations, assumed a key position in this scenario. It was associated with both organization, as a feature of the state, and disorganization, as a feature of society. These associations were articulated in the context of a series of institutional images which expressed the progressive power of

the state. Before examining Hinduism in more detail, then, I want to sketch out some of these key institutional images, in order to get an idea of how the state consistently projected organization as a cultural force.

Images of Organization as Colonial Culture

(a) Law: As it became progressively entrenched, the colonial state in India attempted to establish a legal system recognizable—to itself, its European officers, and the British establishment—as rational and just. As we shall see, the conception of an ancient, 'pure' Hinduism was vital to this project. The significance of systematized law was signposted as early as 1793 by Cornwallis, when he declared that the government itself, despite its 'unquestionable despotism', would be subject to the rule of law. Presenting law in this manner facilitated the construction of the 'framework of a new state consciously projected as based purely on rules, procedures and principles.'[9] The framework, in other words, for the projection of impersonal or neutral organization as a defining characteristic of British power.

This image of the law was reinforced by the introduction of codes of civil and criminal procedure in the 1860s. These codes standardized the approach—or subjection—of any individual to the law. The steady construction of this framework was perceived as having a profound impact on the indigenous population. As James Fitzjames Stephen, legal member of the Viceroy's Council from 1869 to 1872, articulated it:

> The establishment of a system of law which regulates the most important parts of the daily life of the people constitutes in itself a moral conquest more striking, more durable, and far more solid, than the physical conquest which rendered it possible. It exercises an influence over the minds of the people in many ways comparable to that of a new religion.[10]

The first sentence here indicates the way in which the 'regulation'—or, in our terms, organization—of life as a consequence of the legal system was perceived specifically as a force of ('moral') domination. The second sentence locates it implicitly as an ideological force. The impact of this force is exemplified by the trajectory of some forms of protest during the colonial period. Josh has noted the way in which so much peasant unrest was articulated within the framework of legal rights.[11] In our context it will be noted consistently in relation to religious disputes and communal unrest. Law was projected as a rational, organized force in society, to which any class or social bloc could relate, despite the fact that the reality of colonial law was a dislocated and largely unbalanced system.[12]

(b) Aspects of Infrastructural Development—Communication and Movement: One of the most striking features of colonial development during the second half of the nineteenth century was the growth of the rail network across British India. This growth was fuelled by a massive investment of British capital, 'the largest single unit of international investment in the nineteenth century'.[13] The ramifications of this development are obviously far-reaching and complex, both in terms of the colonial economy and the political and social unification of the subcontinent. In the present context, I want to emphasize the way in which the network shifted perceptions of travel and its role in the organization of society.

Travel governed by clock time, according to regular schedules, became an increasingly integral feature of everyday life. In particular, rail travel became a significant factor in the regulation of large movements of people. This is reflected in shifts in the nature of pilgrimage during the late nineteenth century. Festivals at major pilgrimage sites such as Allahabad, Benaras, and Ayodhya grew in size due to increased accessibility, and became major feats of administrative organization.[14] Similarly in the early twentieth century, as Indian nationalism developed into a mass movement, the government concentrated on rail travel as a means of regulating movement, accommodating unrest. During the Flag *Satyagraha* in Nagpur in 1923, for example, the provincial government attempted to diffuse the situation by preventing potential *satyagrahis* from other areas reaching Nagpur; they did this by vetting passengers at stations on the outskirts of the city.[15] In this way, stations became focal points for the monitoring and regulation of large movements of people; symbols, as it were, of a cultural intervention governed by the notion of organization.

This rail-related regulation of movement may be contrasted to the fate under colonial rule of what the government termed 'wandering tribes'—bands of *sannyasis,* vagrants, and itinerant traders who moved about the country, following pilgrimage or trading routes. As one scholar has suggested, this kind of movement represented 'an alternative structure of social and political organization' to the arrangement of the colonial state, which was inherently threatening.[16] Increasingly, the 'dangerousness' of such semi-nomadic communities was justified on the basis that 'they do not lead a settled life' or 'they always move from place to place for the ostensible purpose of their trade'.[17] In 1871, the government introduced the Criminal Tribes Act as a means of eradicating this practice. Under this legislation, the government 'indiscriminately identified entire groups as offenders, making few distinctions between the different

kinds of peripatetics, such as pastoral nomads, bards, minstrels, mendicants and traders, and between castes and tribes.'[18] Groups identified as criminal under the terms of this act were subject to a regime of pass carrying, restricted movement, and in some cases enforced settlement; any unauthorized movement led to imprisonment.[19] This severe restriction of 'disorderly' movement only serves to emphasize the significance of organized, orderly movement as represented by the development of rail travel.

(c) Education: Education is again a familiar area for an examination of the colonial impact in India. Such examination, however, tends to focus on the Anglicist/Orientalist debate in the 1820s and early 1830s, and the subsequent adoption of English as the medium of instruction for higher education after 1835. The structure of the British approach to education, however, is also significant, in that it configured the experience of learning according to a particular model of organization.[20] This is evident in the educational initiatives of the Company prior to the Resolution of 1835. Bernard Cohn, for example, has highlighted the format of colleges set up in Calcutta and Benaras in the late eighteenth century:

> The British conceived of education as taking place in 'institutions', meaning a building with physically divided spaces marking off one 'class' of students from another, as well as teachers from students. There were to be fixed positions of professors, teachers and assistants, who taught regular classes in subjects. The students' progress had to be regularly examined to measure their acquisition of fixed bodies of knowledge. The end of the process was marked by prizes and certification which attested to the students' command of a specifiable body of knowledge.[21]

Despite the fact that both the Calcutta Madrassa and the Sanskrit College in Benaras were projects designed to promote education based on indigenous knowledge, then, they were *organized* within a specific cultural framework. Without this, they would not have had meaning within the colonial project. As Cohn continues, these colleges had to be governed by a 'British metalogic of regularity, uniformity and...fiscal responsibility.'

The influence of organization is again evident at a later stage in the development of the colonial education system. The 'trickle-down' strategy that the government adopted as part of the Anglicist vision of 1835 was recognized as failing by 1854. As a result, a new total system of education, from primary to university, was established in accordance with the Education Despatch of Sir Charles Wood. This Despatch

envisaged a system built in collaboration with private organizations, financed by a system of grants-in-aid. The system developed into a huge educational bureaucracy, monitoring the effectiveness of institutions, paying out grants, and considering applications for fresh aid. This system encouraged the growth of institutions in response to the requirements of provincial bureaucracies, in that the process of applying for and maintaining grants-in-aid was governed by rules, which did much to mould the shape of educational development. In Madras Presidency, for example, a 'teacher certificate' system regulated grants on the basis of teachers' qualifications. In Bombay, a 'payment by results' system paid out grants on the basis of students' success in examinations. Through this 'helter-skelter of instructions and multiplicity of official interpretations' the grants-in-aid system expanded to encompass some 79 per cent of educational institutions in British India by 1900.[22]

(d) Bureaucracy: The education system developed, then, as a facet of a burgeoning bureaucracy. Many of its products—English-educated, middle class young men—would look to this bureaucracy as a means of employment. The bureaucracy itself became, during the nineteenth century, a kind of tool for the organization of colonial society. It effectively defined the division of British India into presidencies, provinces, divisions, and districts. It controlled the development of municipalities, infrastructure, natural resource exploitation, and trade through a myriad of departments that were continually formed, amalgamated, split, and reformed.

Although not accountable to the people, the bureaucracy was nevertheless accountable to itself, and so generated enormous quantities of records detailing its own workings. It is in this area of record keeping that the indigenous middle class was utilized as a facet of colonial organization. The position of clerk became the most recognizable source of employment for middle class Indians completing their education. With executive power remaining largely in the hands of British civil servants, the lot of departmental clerks was an endless process of organizing and reproducing information in triplicate or quadruplicate.

The oppressive nature of this culture of organization has been brought out recently by Sumit Sarkar in references to 'chakri' (clerical work) and the effect of European clock time in colonial Bengal.[23] Interestingly, Sarkar points to three specific sites where the introduction of clock time had resounding impact: railways, schools, and government offices. Whereas in the first two contexts, time discipline was accepted relatively uncritically, he says, in government offices it was often perceived as a means of oppressing the lower bureaucracy, through such factors as

severe punishment for lateness and the extension of the working day—'a kind of *dasatya* (bondage), due to its association with a new discpline of clock time being imposed by alien bosses'. This led in Calcutta in 1905, for example, to a white collar industrial dispute. What it reveals in our context is again the fascinating position of the middle class in relation to colonial discourse. The very proximity of this class to institutions of the colonial state enabled it to disrupt elements of the discourse that underpinned these institutions. Yet at the same time, its predicament is illustrated by the pervasive nature of colonial discourse—Sarkar's citing of the uncontroversial nature of time discipline in the rail and education systems indicates the way in which images of organization had become entrenched in the expanded colonial state.

These images of colonial organization represented a kind of bulwark of modernity, which was made meaningful for colonizer and colonized by contrast with images of indigenous disorder. Disorder was projected through a number of lenses. Effeminacy, indolence, deceitfulness, the closed nature of the village economy: all these images were projected as elemental features of a drifting, changeless society.[24] The contemporary/popular degeneracy of Hinduism was perhaps the most powerful signifier of this indigenous disorganization. Ironically, it was a signifier made more potent by the proximity of another key image of colonial organization, which sought to appropriate Hinduism, to fashion and codify it precisely as a facet of the state. In this context Hinduism as a religion emerged in the nineteenth century as a dualized form, subject to the centrifugal force of these two powerful colonial conceptions.

The Duality of Hinduism: Legal Organization and Popular Disorganization

In 1772 Warren Hastings produced a plan for the effective administration of Bengal which was designed to establish the Company's rule as a recognizable authority in this foreign land. Hastings' plan, which he explained in a letter to the Court of Directors, was to 'adapt our Regulations to the Manners and Understandings of the People, and the Exigencies of the Country, adhering as closely as we are able to their ancient uses and Institutions.'[25] The plan, then, was to govern according to the 'ancient' practices of Indians themselves, and in particular to adhere to a legal system which would be recognized as such. This was consonant with the policy of non-intervention adopted by the company in relation to indigenous affairs. It also made particular sense for a commercial Company to adhere to recognizable laws related to property, for here was an area where disruption would directly affect the Company's ability to

operate. A certain epistemological assumption underpinned Hastings' plan, which is indicated by this use of the phrase 'ancient uses and institutions'. This referred to a notion that the legal system of the indigenous population had 'continued unchanged, from remotest antiquity'.[26] This was particularly so in relation to civil law (i.e. including law related to the issue of property), which under Mughal rule had remained the domain of 'traditional community-based institutions'.[27] This way of conceiving of law implicitly paralleled *shastric* law with ecclesiastical law in England, which covered marriage and divorce, property, religious worship, excommunication, and so on.[28]

The problem for Hastings and other administrators in Bengal was that the repositories of this law were not specified texts (or scripture), but 'professors of the *shastra*', or *pandits*. Much of a *pandit's* learning was based on memorized textual material, acquired through the oral tradition of Brahmanic learning. The material used ranged from 'technical *shastric* material, from epics and legends, and from other treatises of relatively late date (such as *puranas,* spurious *smritis, agamas* and *tantras)* which...played then a valid part in expounding Hinduism as it was lived, learnt and understood.'[29] It was, however, not so much the texts themselves, but rather the fact that the *pandit* possessed learning based on these texts, which gave him the authority to pronounce on legal matters. In addition, the extent to which *pandits* were relied upon varied considerably from area to area. Local custom articulated through *panchayats* was often a far more authoritative basis for the practice of law than the rulings of *pandits*, although there was certainly a relationship between the two.[30]

Initially, British courts dealing with civil claims involving Hindus[31] relied solely on the *vyavasthas* (written or formal 'opinions') of recognized *pandits*. Without proper recourse to the texts upon which the judgements of *pandits* were based, British judges had no choice but to accept *vyavasthas* as the basis for judgements in appropriate cases. There is a central issue of power here. The *vyavastha* system localized power in the decisions of the *pandits*, as opposed to the judgements of Company officials. This was by no means acceptable, and very quickly after the implementation of Hastings' plan the Company began to take steps to circumvent or undermine the localized power of the *pandits*.

This implicit power of the *pandits* in the Company's courts was reflected in the unease with which they were viewed by officials. On the one hand they were respected as learned professors of the *shastra,* yet on the other they were distrusted and felt to be moulding *vyavasthas* to suit their own interests. This distrust reflected the widely-held belief that an

original and ancient body of *shastric* law did exist in textual form, and that the *pandits* were deliberately obscuring it in order to maintain their position of power.[32] The original body of laws was made doubly obscure by the 'corruption' it had suffered over the centuries as a result of interpretations and commentaries. Much of the project of Sanskritic Studies which developed around the turn of the century was directed towards the reconstruction—the organization—of this original code. The Government Sanskrit College, established at Benaras in 1791, emphasized above all the study of the *Dharma Shastras*, which dealt specifically with sacred law.[33]

William Jones, who was appointed a judge in the Calcutta Supreme Court in 1783, became the first British official to develop a proper command over Sanskrit, and was largely responsible for the establishment of the first institution for the study of Indology, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, in 1784.[34] His major work was to produce a Code or Digest of Hindu law which would adequately represent the legal aspects of the *Dharma Shastras*. Throughout, Jones was concerned with revealing a 'pure' form of Hindu law, which would allow European judges to make judgements which they could be certain were correct.

The structure of Jones' thought is revealing. He was intent on 'discovering' or 'reconstituting' a system of law which was *the* true form of that system within the parameters of the Hindu religion. Without this, the indigenous population would not be able to receive proper justice . The true form of the system could only reside in a text, and not individual or collective memory, because the latter necessitated interpretation, and interpretation implicitly suggested the corruption of the original. Text, then, was central, and since the *shastric* texts were essentially religious texts, this emphasis on texts meant an emphasis on scripture. Again, as interpretation implied corruption, the greatest authority, the truest form of the text, must be the oldest. Antiquity embodied in scripture was equated with the 'real' tradition of the Hindus.

In their efforts to produce an organized system of law, then, colonial administrators and Orientalist scholars projected the image of an essential religious tradition based on its most ancient texts. The Aryan society that apparently produced these texts was consequently projected as representing a so-called Golden Age in the history of India. This Golden Age construct reflected the preoccupation of early Orientalists like Jones with classical civilization in Europe—the Golden Age of Greece and Rome.[35] The work of Jones is replete with allusions to the latter, and by linking Sanskrit to European languages he began to construct a common history for Indian and European civilization. The most critical point in

the present context, however, is not the linking of Indian to European civilization (although this was indeed to become an enduring and influential image in nineteenth-century Hinduism) but rather the *de-linking* of the former from the actual practices of contemporary Hinduism. The glorification of Aryan civilization as the depository of a true or normative form of Hinduism necessitated the projection of its contemporary legacy as a degenerate, debased form, permeated with superstition and idolatry, and indicative of the degeneration of indigenous society.

Two distinct levels of Hinduism, then, are constructed, which configure much of the thinking on Hinduism during the nineteenth century. Monier-Williams, for example, refers to contemporary Hinduism in 1891 as 'Brahminism run to seed and spread out into a confused tangle of divine personalities and incarnations. The one system is the rank and luxuriant outcome of the other.' Again, Alfred Lyall comments in 1884 that popular Hinduism was 'a whole vegetation of cognate beliefs sprouting up in every stage of growth beneath the shadow of the great orthodox traditions and allegories of Brahminism'.[36]

The subtext of degeneration in the Orientalist conception of Hinduism was, ironically, strengthened by the archetypal exponent of its supposed antithesis, James Mill. Mill's work can be perceived as the inspiration of a generation of Anglicists who battled with and eventually defeated Orientalism in the field of educational policy during the 1830s. His seminal work *A History of British India* appeared in 1818, and was destined to become a standard text for Indian Civil Servants. Rooted firmly in utilitarian notions of evolutionary political and societal progress, Mill's history effectively rubbished the idea of Aryan civilization as a golden era, stating that its ritualistic, ceremonial achievements were configured by a primitive despotism which was antithetical to progress. The most enduring feature of Mill's history, however, was his division of Indian history into three distinct eras: Hindu, Muslim, and British. There is an obvious shift in the method of categorization here. Mill does not call the third era the Christian era—this would not make sense, because for Mill British rule was essentially secular and based on the rule of neutral, equalizing law. Previous periods of Indian history, however, are characterized by the religious affiliation of the dynasties. Many historians have illustrated the fallacy of this categorization,[37] but it was undoubtedly influential in nineteenth-century India as a structure for the interpretation of Indian history. The intellectual elite which had cooperated with the Orientalists now had a framework for understanding the degeneration of Hinduism implied by the identification of the Golden Age. The

'Muslim period' came to be perceived as the 'dark ages' of Hinduism, in which religious and social persecution precipitated the decline into oppressive casteism, idolatry, superstition—all the signifiers of this contemporary degeneracy and disorganization.

Such images of disorganization, then, both reinforced and legitimized the ascendance of British 'organized' rule. State-sanctioned textual Hinduism, a key feature of the British 'rule of law', was projected precisely as the antithesis of contemporary degenerate Hinduism. The dual image was enormously influential in the development of middle class ideas about the religion during the second half of the nineteenth century. Most straightforwardly, it meant developing ideas which sought to 'redeem' the religion from its degenerate state, and reconstitute it in a form true to its 'ancient' image. This might be said to articulate a kind of 'baseline' rationale for the idea of nineteenth-century reform. The historical process of ideology formation, however, is rarely so straightforward. The variety of middle class ideas about Hinduism that emerged reflect a variety of pressures that were exerted in the context of colonial modernity. Given the nature of images outlined here, it is perhaps not surprising that these pressures were manifested primarily in terms of an organization imperative.

The Pressure to Organize

There were two sources of this organization imperative during the second half of the nineteenth century which were particularly explicit in terms of their effect on Hinduism. One was the increasing incursion of aggressive new religious influences—principally Hindu and Christian—on the established structure of the religion. The other was the increased significance of the colonial discourse of organization. The organization of the state and the disorganization of society provided the groundwork for the production of this discourse. As the state became more entrenched in the first half of the nineteenth century, methods of 'being public', of articulating issues and concerns in the public space, were increasingly subject to its parameters. The most significant events in the development of the discourse, however, occurred in the aftermath of the 1857 Rebellion. This revolt against the order and organization of the Empire was followed by an elaboration of the hegemonic arrangement which raised the profile of the colonial discourse of organization.

1858: Developing the Colonial Discourse of Organization

In 1858 the Government of India Act formally transferred ultimate authority in India from the East India Company to the Crown. Hence-

forth the Court of Directors was replaced by a Secretary of State for India (i.e. a minister within the British Cabinet), assisted by a Council of India comprised mostly of recently returned officials from the subcontinent. Despite the unparliamentary nature of the Council, the Act projected the idea that the Queen's Parliament in Britain formed the ultimate authority in India. At the apex of imperial power, a representative body held sway, a body that operated through the language and institutions of democracy. The fact that this body was representative of the British and not the Indian people was not the point; what was created was an impression of representation, justice, and benevolence in the wake of the Rebellion.

This impression was precisely reflected in the Queen's Proclamation of 1 November 1858. As she explained in a letter to Lord Derby, the first Secretary of State for India, Victoria wanted the document to 'breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence and religious feeling, pointing out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown.'[38] In consonance with the assumption that the Rebellion was largely the result of an excessive display of religious passion, the Proclamation dwelt upon the communication of these 'feelings' in relation to religion, emphasizing the state's neutrality towards indigenous religion whilst also affirming the monarch's own faith in Christianity:

> Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.[39]

Here, religious observance is articulated as a 'right', enjoying the 'equal and impartial protection of the law'. It is situated within a framework of theoretical 'subjecthood' governed by the rule of law. The Queen's government in India was established by law, and the indigenous population assumed a kind of quasi-legal status in relation to the metropolis through their recognition as the Queen's subjects. 'The Company's Government is at an end,' stated a contemporary newspaper, 'the name has followed the substance, and now the inhabitants of this country can in truth declare they are the subjects

to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen.'[40] These subjects practised their own religion as a legal right.

Two principal points can be drawn from the Proclamation. First, it established the idioms of constitutional liberalism as the appropriate language of politics in colonial India. At a public meeting in Calcutta in November 1858, the Proclamation was described as based on 'the justest, the broadest principles...Humanity, Mercy, Justice breathe through every line.'[41] The Calcutta-based *Hindoo Patriot* commented that 'the Sovereign Will has ordained that Her auspicious reign will be marked by the promotion of all works of public utility, by the introduction of general reforms and by the...amelioration of Her subjects irrespective of colour or creed of which no distinction is professed to be observed.'[42] A vital element of the colonial discourse of organization was consolidated here. The Proclamation provided a reference point for the articulation of 'representative' politics in India as a feature of the colonial state. As we shall see, it was persistently invoked in this way. For early nationalists in particular, the Proclamation came to be perceived as a statement of civil rights. As the Bengali Surendranath Banerjea stated in 1892, it was the 'Magna Carta of our rights and privileges'.[43] Although it was little more than a statement of intent, the Proclamation provided the justification for the assertion of these rights and privileges. This assertion, then, was symbolic—it had nothing constitutional to refer to, only the equally symbolic 'Humanity, Mercy, Justice' of the Queen's statement.

Second, the Proclamation established religion as central to this symbolic projection of rights and privileges. The reason for the prominence of religion can be explained through British preoccupations in the wake of the 1857 Rebellion, and through the underlying assumption that religion, degenerate though it may be, was the motor force of Indian civilization and social relations.[44] What is most significant is that it brings religion into the realm of colonial politics in a quite explicit manner, a manner articulated through the idioms of constitutional liberalism as explained above.

An interesting example of this is provided by Partha Chatterjee's lengthy citation from the memoirs of the Bengali nationalist, Bepin-chandra Pal.[45] Recalling his student days in Calcutta shortly before his death in 1932, Pal describes the operation of student boarding houses in the 1870s as 'small republics...managed on strictly democratic lines'. Disputes were settled by a 'Court' of the whole 'House', with offenders being threatened with expulsion. Most

interesting is Pal's description of debate over the food conventions of the house mess:

> The composition of our mess called for some sort of a compromise between the so-called orthodox and the Brahmo and other heterodox members of our republic. So a rule was passed by the unanimous vote of the whole 'House', that no member should bring food to the house...which outraged the feelings of Hindu orthodoxy. It was however clearly understood that the members of the mess, as a body and even individually, would not interfere with what anyone took outside the house.

As Chatterjee explains it, the blending here of idioms of 'European civic and political life' with what may be termed the traditional issues of commensality and food sensibility reflect the 'imbrication of two discourses'—the discourses of elite and subaltern politics. The implication is that the 'orthodox' sensibility over food pollution is to be perceived as subaltern, whilst the idioms of European civic and political life, the framework of the mini republic, are to be perceived as elite. It is easy to see here a reverberation of the tradition/modernity model as the wellspring of the social dynamic. Pal's fellow students are presented as articulating both elite (modern) and subaltern (traditional) ideologies—the inherent tension between the two constitutes the force through which decisions are made, society is moved on, but there is nevertheless an implication of dissatisfaction, of the traditional intervention 'holding back' the forces of modernity. Considering the aims of the Subaltern Studies group of which Chatterjee is a leading member, this is perhaps an unhelpful perception of the subaltern intervention.

By emphasizing the position of religion in relation to politics as indicated by the Proclamation, the passage acquires somewhat different implications. The students in Pal's mess are very much a part of elite of late-nineteenth-century Calcutta. Their construction of a mini republic reflects their belief in the language and institutions of representation, the same language and institutions projected symbolically by the Proclamation (up to a point, of course—it is doubtful whether Victoria would have been impressed by the idea of a 'mini republic' operating in Calcutta, at the heart of colonial power). This discourse is brought to bear on all aspects of life within the mini republic, including those related to food. Those described by Pal as 'orthodox' were as much part of this project as anyone else; indeed, judging by the result of the vote, they were in a position of strength. The point is that the whole community respected the idioms of representational politics as a valid framework for the organization of their collective life, and the issue of commensality

and food sensibility was an integral part of this life—as integral and as 'modern' as the payment of the rent and the punishment of offenders against the democratic rules of the 'House'. The domain of religious observance and cultural norms—a domain described by Chatterjee as 'utterly incongruous with that of civil society'—is in this elite context a domain influenced by the language of colonial discourse, a point which is resoundingly confirmed by the prominence given to religion by the Proclamation. Representation and the rights of individuals—the idioms that informed the colonial discourse of organization—have a legitimate presence in this domain.

After 1858, then, the discourse of organization emerged as a more elaborate feature of the state's hegemonic arrangement. The Proclamation presented the idea of rights and the representation of these rights as a feature of Imperial citizenship, or more accurately Subjecthood, sanctioned by the rule of law. The transfer of power to the Crown and the institution of a Secretary of State for India answerable to Parliament appeared to confirm the proximity of representative institutions to the processes of government in India. These features emphasized the notion of 'symbolic representation' as a means of articulating indigenous concerns. The 'right' of religious freedom confirmed by the Proclamation created the space for the articulation of religion in this manner. It is in this sense that the developing discourse of organization increasingly acts as a pressure on Hinduism to become organized in the public space. As issues of religion became more prominent in this space during the second half of the nineteenth century, Hindus were increasingly required to articulate their concerns within this framework. It became the established, recognizable format for meaningful expression within the space.

Pressures on the Established Structure of Hinduism

Certain factors encouraged Hindus to assert their religious rights far more forcefully in this context. Often, this assertion revolved around the position of women in Hindu society. The debate over *sati* in the 1820s is an early example of this. It was followed by a succession of legal challenges and government interventions on issues such as widow remarriage, the age of consent, and conjugal rights.[46] My focus, however, is on issues which questioned the established structure of Hinduism, and particularly the predicament of low castes and untouchables in relation to this structure. It is these issues which forced Hindus to examine the 'shape' of their religion quite explicitly in terms of organization and disorganization.

(a) Missionary Activity: The pattern of conversion from Hinduism to Christianity during the later decades of the nineteenth century constitutes

an overt pressure at this level. Whereas the early years of missionary activity had concentrated upon the conversion of high caste individuals, from the 1860s onwards missions in various parts of India began to convert low caste groups. Indeed, these groups were often converted as a caste bloc, following the decision of caste elders to take the step.[47] This trend has been termed 'mass movement'. Census figures confirm rapid increases in Christian population between 1871 and 1901, and most reports record the predominance of low caste converts as a feature of this increase.[48] It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the motivations behind low caste conversion during this period. Some researchers have pointed to localized reasons, whilst others have emphasized common factors such as the perceived egalitarian approach of Christianity and a general desire amongst low castes for self-respect.[49] The significance of mass movements in the present context is that they presented a picture of Hinduism as a religion being eroded from its base upwards. In addition, low caste conversion begged the question of who were the converted: were low castes and untouchables Hindus, or were they 'animists', as many tribal groups, for example, were described in census reports?

Two interrelated narratives, therefore, are indicated by the success of mass movements towards Christianity. First, the vulnerability of Hinduism, due to the oppression of low caste groups. Second, the question of the shape of Hinduism, how it defined its boundaries and maintained its own identity. The prominence of missionary successes in census returns ensured that these issues were tangible in the public space and a source of increasing debate in the press. They were also, of course, issues which very much concerned the Hindu reform movements.

(b) Reformism: In later sections, nineteenth-century reformism will be examined as part of the movement to transform Hinduism through organization. Here, however, it will be examined not as an agent but as an 'external' pressure on the structure of Hinduism. Understanding how this pressure was exerted entails the identification of the defining characteristics of reformism in this context.

The historiography of Hindu reform locates it as a feature of colonial society from the early nineteenth century. A classic account will begin with the work of Rammohun Roy and perhaps Henry Derozio, move through the Brahmo Samaj in its various forms, the Prarthana Samaj as its western Indian counterpart, the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission, before slipping into the more eclectic movements of the twentieth century.[50] The reformers are cast as modernizers, inculcating a more 'humane' or ethical religiosity, characterized by a 'rational' approa-

ch to religious truth and the rejection of caste, and of practices such as icon worship and *sati*. Often, reform movements are located as a kind of Indian version of Protestant reformation in Europe.[51]

The hegemonic text of this trend is J.N. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements In India*.[52] Although encompassing a far broader spectrum of movements during the nineteenth century, Farquhar articulates the notion of western-inspired ethical reform, held back by a 'reactionary' orthodoxy. The resurgence of this reactionary force, he concludes, occurs within the context of a 'continuous and steadily increasing inner decay' in Hinduism, and may be equated with 'the revival of the ancient religions of the Roman Empire in the early Christian centuries'.[53] Farquhar identifies colonial influence as the source of progressive elements in the nineteenth-century movements ('the stimulating influences are almost exclusively Western'[54]); he also focuses on middle class movements, particularly the Brahmo Samaj, as agents of progress. Progressive reform is defined by its proximity to European conceptions of modern society: the eradication of caste, the emancipation of women, the condemnation of idolatry, and individual communion with God. All efforts to promote such causes as these were to be identified as reformist, as long as they were articulated within a 'modernist' or middle class framework. The problem for this kind of historiography emerges when the same causes were promoted outside of such frameworks, using non-western idioms. As research into pre-colonial India is extended, it is becoming increasingly clear that such causes were espoused by numerous Hindu movements, particularly those within the *bhakti* tradition.[55] What then constitutes the distinctiveness of reform in the nineteenth century is rendered problematic.

Some attempt to relocate the particular attributes of nineteenth-century reform has been made by Kenneth Jones, in his *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India*. Jones begins his sweeping review with the exemplified statement that there was nothing new in the idea of socio-religious reform in British India. India had, indeed, been the site of a remarkable array of reformist movements over a period of some three millennia. He then goes on to assert the singular character of nineteenth-century reform, by making a conceptual distinction between 'transitional' and 'acculturative' movements. Transitional movements 'had their origins in the pre-colonial world and arose from indigenous forms of socio-religious dissent', and displayed a 'lack of concern with adjusting concepts and programmes to the colonial world'. Acculturative movements were driven largely by 'English-educated South Asians influenced by the specific culture of England', and sought an

accommodation of 'the personal position of...members within the colonial world'.[56]

The key distinguishing concept here is what Jones calls the 'colonial milieu': a space where 'indigenous civilizations of South Asia came into active contact with British culture'. Movements that emerged within this milieu were acculturative; those outside it were transitional. Jones perceives that there is no substantive difference between the two forms—acculturative movements rested as much on 'the indigenous heritage of social and religious protest' as did transitional, and were 'in no way... totally new or without roots in the general high cultures of South Asia and the specific sub-cultures of a given region'. The difference, then, is defined through the 'point of origin' of a given movement—i.e. whether it stems from inside or outside of the colonial milieu.[57]

The conceptual framework enables Jones to accommodate a whole host of movements which have been marginalized in the historiography of religious reform. This is in itself an important contribution to understandings of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless there appears to be little significance in the framework if the central idea of a colonial milieu is not sufficiently theorized. Distinguishing movements on the basis of their origins being inside or outside this milieu reduces the framework to the status of a taxonomic device, which becomes increasingly irrelevant in the complex ideological environment of the twentieth century. Consequently, in his discussion of later movements, and also in his discussion of communalism and religious nationalism, Jones is unable to utilize the conceptual framework he has mapped out for the interpretation of the nineteenth century.[58] The precise significance of nineteenth-century reform to the development of Hinduism is therefore not entirely clear.

How, then, might one articulate this significance? What, if anything, was distinctive about nineteenth-century reform? One approach is to focus on the particular situation of these movements in relation to established Hinduism.[59] This is only possible, however, if one understands what 'established Hinduism' means. After all, if we are to define reform, it is necessary in the first instance to identify what exactly is to be reformed. The implication of presenting a 'protestant-style' reform movement may be seen as the parallel presentation of a 'catholic-style' establishment. For Jones, as for many historians of this period, this is an irresistible image—an institutionalized, complacent, and essentially corrupt force in contemporary Hinduism, struggling against the Lutheran zeal of Arya reformism. It was, as Jones says, 'the most basic of all struggles.'[60] There are two major problems with this model. First, evidence suggests that the projected polarization of ideas between modern reformers and a

traditional establishment was far from clear-cut.[61] Second, this transparently Christian model of historical development is inappropriate in the identification of a Hindu establishment, in the sense that it implies the idea of a monolithic orthodoxy as central. This is not to say that the idea of orthodoxy does not exist within Hinduism, but rather that it is constructed within a framework radically different to that suggested by the Christian model. Some scholars have attempted to define this framework, and I will use this work to underpin my understanding of 'established Hinduism'.[62] Briefly, the framework is regionally specific, and it is configured by the relationship between two institutional structures—caste and *sampradaya.*[63] Together, these structures define a code of practice and a range of doctrinal truth that has direct influence over *svadharma*, or individual, personal *dharma.* What may be called orthodoxy, then, is configured by regional establishments, formed through the interaction—to greater or lesser degree—of dominant caste and *sampradaya* institutions.[64]

An implicit fluidity is recognized as a feature of these institutions. Anncharlotte Eschmann has developed this idea by illustrating the range of views emanating from different *sampradayas.* The *sampradaya* form, she says, encompasses classical manifestations of Hinduism, such as the school founded by Sankaracharya, as well as dissenting or protesting traditions such as Virashaivism. The latter is an example of what Eschmann calls the 'radical *sampradayas*', which not only generated doctrinal change in Hinduism but also challenged aspects of ritual and social practice such as image worship and caste.[65] Despite this function, radical *sampradayas* are nevertheless part of the institutional structure of Hinduism. They exist alongside caste, and generate change from the coterminous position of the *ashram* or *matha.* The kind of structural opposition that is evident, for example, between Church and sect in Christianity, does not exist in the relationship between caste and *sampradaya.* Even in its radical manifestation, then, the *sampradaya* will not necessarily present a transformative challenge to the system as a whole.[66]

Eschmann considers it an 'astonishing fact' that the nineteenth-century reform movements did not build on the work of radical *sampradayas.* 'Social claims and the quest for social changes, advocated by the radical *sampradayas*,' she notes, did not dovetail with similar claims and changes made by organizations like the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj, because the former were 'fundamentally opposed to the living Hindu tradition'.[67] Here then, the distinction between Jones' transitional and acculturative movements is beginning to acquire depth. Eschmann cites as a nineteenth-century radical *sampradaya* the Satya Mahima Dharma

movement, a movement identified by Jones as transitional.[68] This movement was widespread amongst low castes and tribals in Orissa, and also reached Andhra Pradesh, Bengal, and Assam during the second half of the nineteenth century. The movement was avowedly monotheistic, critical of idol worship, and of Brahmanic practice, as also of the institution of caste as a whole. Much of the teachings of Mahima Gosain, the founder of the movement, was drawn from the medieval Vaishnavite school of Pancasakha, which was also an Orissan, anti-Brahman tradition.[69] The Satya Mahima Dharm agenda, then, may be said to comply broadly with the reformist agenda of an acculturative movement with which it was contemporary, such as the Arya Samaj. The two are nevertheless perceived as entirly separate.

There are of course many differences between these two movements. One appealed to low castes and tribals with little or no formal education, the other principally to well-educated high or dominant castes. One was based in the rural tracts of an eastern state, the other in the cities and towns of the north-west. In the context of the present argument, the most significant difference is in how these two movements were situated in relation to established Hinduism. It is this difference which adds an interesting dimension to the transitional/acculturative taxonomy. Satya Mahima Dharma emanated from a *sampradaya;* its self-image situates it within what Eschmann calls 'the living Hindu tradition', and although vigorously rejected by regional orthodoxy, it was nevertheless part of a broad process of change and assimilation that is encompassed by established Hinduism. It was transitional, then, not so much because it 'had its origins in the pre-colonial world', but rather because it was part of this process of change and assimilation, the 'living Hindu tradition'. The Arya Samaj, on the other hand, cannot be situated within this context; it was opposed to the tradition itself, and indeed 'wanted to replace it'.[70] This movement was acculturative because when it first emerged it situated itself outside the framework of established Hinduism (i.e. the caste–*sampradaya* nexus), and attempted to provide an alternative framework for the expression of religious truth, based on particular aspects of western, Christian tradition.

Presently I examine precisely how this alternative framework was constructed. What it illustrates here is that the growing prominence of reformism in the nineteenth century constituted a particular pressure on the tradition of Hinduism, concentrating on the structure of that tradition as exemplified by the caste–*sampradaya* nexus. In a similar fashion to Christian mass movements, therefore, reformism focused attention and debate on the shape of Hinduism, on how it was organized

in relation to other religions and to society. At the same time, the development of representation as a feature of the discourse of organization encouraged the articulation of this debate in the public space. I will now examine the nature of the movements and debates that emerged.

Establishing Patterns of Organization: Hindu Movements in the Late Nineteenth Century

The earliest examples of Hinduism articulated in modern organizational frameworks were formulated in the first half of the nineteenth century in Calcutta, the seat of colonial government and the hub of the expanding state. The Brahmo Samaj, formed by Rammohun Roy in 1828 as the Brahmo Sabha, is commonly cited as the first reforming organization in India. Until 1830, it was little more than an informal weekly gathering of Bengali Brahmans in a private Calcutta residence. The organization was consolidated through the construction of a permanent Brahmo building, which was run by a board of trustees appointed to conduct the affairs of the Samaj. In addition, a trust deed was drawn up which gave legal definition to the organization.[71] By the end of 1830, however, Rammohun had left for England and the organization, lacking his guiding energy, became virtually dormant.

More significant at this stage was the formation of the Calcutta Dharma Sabha in 1831. It was formed by those elements of the Calcutta intelligentsia who had petitioned Parliament early in 1830 opposing Bentinck's *sati* decree, and as such it is commonly cited as the first orthodox institution of the colonial era.[72] Its main weapon in its stated objective of defending Hindu tradition was to formulate petitions and memorials addressed to authority. As such, it developed an appropriate form: it included 'a president, a board of directors, a secretary, and a treasurer, and the members regularly organised committees for special purposes'; in addition, the Sabha 'conducted its meetings according to strict rules of parliamentary procedure'.[73] When the Brahmo Samaj was revived in the early 1840s by Debendranath Tagore, it followed a similar pattern of development, establishing the Brahmo covenant as a formal basis for membership and merging the structure of the Samaj with that of the Tattvabodhini Sabha, Debendranath's 'highly effective organization' geared towards resisting the encroachment of missionary influence in Bengal.[74] Both organizations drew their membership from the same social bloc: the Calcutta *bhadralok,* a landowning, high caste bloc, with vested interests in British rule, and after 1835, almost invariably English educated.

Here, then, is an example of the influence of the state's organizational culture on the presentation of Hinduism in the public domain. Hindus operating within this domain articulated their concerns through the formation of bodies which had a coherent meaning within this context. These bodies were modern in the sense that they were governed by constitutions and aims and objectives, they had secretaries, executive boards and membership lists, and they employed techniques such as subscription campaigns, public meetings and petitions to authority. Within this framework, the Brahmo Samaj 'represented' a reforming, modernizing constituency, and the Dharma Sabha 'represented' a traditional, orthodox constituency. The constituencies were projected in order to legitimize or give meaning to these organizations within the public space, despite the lack of any tangible evidence that such constituencies existed.

Both the Dharma Sabha and the Brahmo Samaj were limited by the comparatively isolated social status of their adherents. Nevertheless their form and their position in relation to the colonial public domain illustrates the pattern of organization which was to develop in the later nineteenth century, in the context of some of the images and pressures on Hinduism noted above. Even at this early stage, the pattern is marked by a template of polarization, which sees the presentation of reformism and orthodoxy as opposing constituencies in a projected 'community of Hindus'.[75] This examination of the development of Hindu movements will concentrate on the elaboration of these oppositional positions: how they articulated themselves in relation to each other and to the wider world of Hinduism.

Reformism: The Transformative Structure of the Arya Samaj

Dayananda completed the first edition of his major work *Satyarth Prakash,* or 'Light of Truth', in 1875. This work articulated the basic principles of the Arya Samaj creed: the belief in a single, unitary God, the identification of the Vedas as the embodiment of complete truth, and the logical inference that the age of Vedic religion constituted the Golden Age not only of Hinduism, but of all religion. Dayananda hence perceived his work as the re-introduction of Vedic practices in Hinduism and the opening up of such practices to the whole populace. As Lajpat Rai comments in 1914:

> It may be difficult for us to visualise that in the second half of the nineteenth century the Vedas were a sealed book in India, and no one could even read them, much less quote them in open debate attended by all communities, Hindus and non-Hindus alike. At present the Vedas are being read, studied and commented upon by all classes and castes of Hindus. This is the greatest

service rendered by Dayanand to the cause of religious and intellectual as well as social freedom in India, and this alone entitles him to be called the Saviour of Hindu India.[76]

As a Samajist himself, one can expect Lajpat Rai to overemphasize the achievements of the Swami. Nevertheless this passage gives an indication of the kind of impact Dayananda's teaching attempted to effect. What Lajpat Rai describes is a process of 'textualization' of the Vedas. In certain (admittedly small) sections of Indian society, Vedic texts were by the second decade of the twentieth century being 'read, studied and commented upon by all classes and castes of Hindus'. The Vedas are projected as the 'Book' of Hinduism, in the same manner as the Koran or the Bible is projected as the 'Book', the textual embodiment, of Islam and Christianity. On this basis, Dayananda developed a system whereby religious texts were deemed as either *arsha* (the Vedas and any text based on a proper understanding of the Vedas—such as Manu Smriti), or *unarsha* (generally products of the post-Mahabharata period, with no connection to the Vedas).[77] In short, Dayananda attempted to establish a fixed, clearly demarcated Hindu canon.[79] Any individual, then, who accepted Dayananda's teachings and who was sufficiently educated (i.e. in Sanskrit, the language of revelation) could contemplate the universal truths of the Vedas directly.

This objectification of religious truth formed the basis of Dayananda's rejection of the contemporary caste system (*jati)* in favour of an idealized vision of society structured in accordance with the Yajur Veda's four *varnas:* Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Dayananda's interpretation of *varna-vyavastha* cited merit, not birth, as the determining factor in the system:

All individuals should be placed in different *Classes* according to their qualification, accomplishments and character. By adopting this system all will advance in every respect, because the higher *Classes* will be in constant fear of their children being degraded to the *Sudra Class,* if they are not properly educated. The same fear will also make the children acquire knowledge and culture. Whilst the lower *Classes* will be stimulated to exert themselves for admission into the *Classes* above them.[79]

In reality, this system upheld the notion of an elite socio-religious group—the Brahmans remained the mediators of religious truth—but it was an elite defined not by the 'closed' signifier of birth, but rather by the more accessible notion of an appropriate education.

Christophe Jaffrelot cites this approach to caste as a strategy of 'reform and defence' of hierarchical, Brahmanical Hinduism.[80] Dayananda's

emphasis on the importance of the meritocratic *varna* system, he says, is indicative of a strategy of emulation of the western tradition, in that it represents an expression of 'individualistic values'.[81] This strategy constituted reform, which was then employed as a defence of existing tradition. Jaffrelot suggests that Dayananda, as a Brahman, was primarily concerned to 'protect the cultural equilibrium'.[82] Thus 'even though he considered the Brahmans to be responsible for the development of superstitions and the decline of Hindu society, the alternative social model he proposed was based largely on the traditional—mainly Brahmanical—world view....'[83] For Jaffrelot, then, Dayananda's work represents a reformulation of established social hierarchies and as such it appears as an appropriate antecedent to the reactionary tendencies of Hindu nationalism.

Emulation—the 'paradoxical imitation of the Other'—is perceived by Jaffrelot as strengthening the position of Hinduism in its confrontation with the aggressive proselytizing of Christianity:

> [Arya Samaj practices] contain a mimetic dimension, in so far as they imply a reform of Hinduism inspired by the values of its western opponents. However, this imitation entails a strategy of assimilating those cultural traits which give the opponent his superiority and prestige in order to resist him more effectively, while pretending to discover such traits in one's own 'original civilisation'.[84]

The strategy of emulation leads us here to a notion of Dayananda 'pretending' to discover individualism in the Aryan *varna* model in order to appropriate what were perceived as superior western values. Although there is some doubt as to the precise meaning of Jaffrelot's point here,[85] the general argument is indicative of the kind of problems posed by locating 'cultural traits' as the principal area of emulation. The *Satyarth Prakash* certainly refers to western values such as duty, discipline, and patriotism (although not, explicitly, individualism) as causes of European advancement,[86] but it is questionable whether these values constituted formative or motivating factors in the development of Dayananda's Hinduism. More importantly, the linking of this kind of emulation to the defence of existing structures situates the idea of reform within rather narrow parameters. If the rejection of *jati* in favour of *varna* was simply a way to 'protect the cultural equilibrium' associated with Brahman dominance, then the implications of Arya reformism in this area may be reasonably expected to have produced a somewhat muted response from established Hinduism. In fact, as we shall see, when the Samaj began to put the idea of merit-based *varna* into practice in the form of

low caste *shuddhi*, it faced fierce resistance from precisely the forces it is presented as protecting in Jaffrelot's analysis.

This resistance, I would say, reflects the more radical implications of Dayananda's work in this area. By shifting the weight of religious authority on to the written text of the Vedas in Sanskrit, Dayananda provided the rationale for a transformative approach to the caste structure. Of course, the institution of *varna-vyavastha* would maintain the position of Brahmans as the elite of the structure, but this elite maintains its authority through its relationship with a fixed, textual canon of religious truth, rather than through the 'natural' superiority of birth. This departure from the 'traditional—mainly Brahmanical—world view' was to cause much tension between the Arya Samaj and established Hinduism during the first forty years of its existence.

The transformative nature of Dayananda's creed was reflected in the structure and character of the Arya Samaj. The Swami established the Samaj in Bombay in 1875, but the organization had its most profound impact in Punjab. Dayananda travelled to Punjab in 1877, and the Lahore Samaj was established within two months of his arrival. The membership was dominated by trading castes—Aroras, Banias, and particularly Khatris. These, however, were trading castes with a difference: it was exactly these castes that formed the basis of the rapidly emerging English-educated elite in Punjab, fulfilling the new demands of government bureaucracy, the legal system, and the education system in the province.[87]

The Lahore Samaj was to become the central unit in the development of the Samaj structure throughout Punjab during the 1880s and 1890s. The Punjab was then to become the basis for extension into other provinces, particularly the United Provinces. The fundamental element of the Samaj structure was the local branch organization. Any nine individuals (male or female) willing to accept the Ten Principles *(Niyams)* of the Arya Samaj could set up a local branch. Expansion was aided by the considerable elasticity of these Principles. As one scholar notes, 'One could apparently be an Arya Samajist while following practically all the social customs of orthodox Hinduism.'[88] What this means, of course, is that Samajists would not jeopardize their caste status by agreeing to the Ten Principles. In this sense, then, the Arya Samaj maintained a critical presence within the broad framework of established Hinduism.

At the same time, two factors ensured that the transformative potential of Dayananda's creed remained. First, despite the generic character of the Ten Principles, Principle Three clearly emphasized an aspect of Dayananda's teaching that has been identified as critical:

The Vedas are the books of all true Knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas to read them and to instruct others in them, to hear them read, and to recite them to others.[89]

There has been a tendency to emphasize the first part of this statement, as the only statement in the Principles that alludes to the status of the Vedas.[90] What is perhaps more interesting is the second half, which affirms the study, discussion, and teaching of the Vedas as the 'paramount duty of all Aryas'. In the context of Dayananda's fixed, textual canon, this statement asserts the principle of 'open access' to the Vedas, and the Samaj's obligation to 'carry the message' of Vedic truth to others. As noted earlier, this assertion challenged fundamental aspects of established Brahmanical Hinduism.

The second transformative factor was the Samaj Mandir, or meeting house. The Mandir developed as the basic institutional unit of the Arya Samaj; the focal point of each branch organization, however large or small, where all its regular activities were held. Principal among these activities was the weekly service, which consisted of Vedic ritual, singing of hymns, prayers and a sermon. These services were open to the public. In addition, the Mandir was the venue for Samaj committee meetings and for elections to that committee. It would also be used for specialist services, such as marriage ceremonies, and also for regular classes. Most important of these latter were classes in Hindi and Sanskrit, which each Samaj was theoretically obliged to arrange for those of its members not conversant with either of these two core languages.[91]

In effect, the Samaj Mandir assumed the position of a church-like organization, tending to the needs of the 'congregation' of local Samajists. This parallel was consciously perceived by contemporary Samajists. For example, when Lajpat Rai commented on public access to Samaj services, he said that 'anybody can come into the Church of God and occupy whatever seat he likes'.[92] This kind of language was easily projected on to the Arya Samaj as a whole; for example, in a speech in 1908, Lala Munshi Ram (later Swami Shraddhanand) referred to the Samaj as the 'Vedic Church' and called on Aryas to 'cultivate the grace of faith, and bear the cross'.[93]

Emulation, then, is certainly evident in organizational terms. What distinguished the Arya Samaj, as I have said, was its situation outside the framework of established Hinduism, providing an alternative framework for the expression of religious truth. The church-like structure of the Samaj constituted material articulation of this alternative framework. Duties such as the selection and training of priests, the trusteeship of

sacraments such as marriage, the admission of individuals by birth and the power to excommunicate them, were all either general caste responsibilities or recognized as the preserve of certain castes. In Christianity, these functions were characteristic of the Church.[94] By constructing an institutional space similar to that of the Church, the Arya Samaj aligned itself in direct confrontation to these functions of the caste system. It is here, then, on the level of the organization of Hinduism, that the transformative potential of Dayananda's ideology was manifested.

Orthodoxy: Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal

Earlier, it was suggested that the pattern of organization that emerged in Hinduism during the nineteenth century was marked by a template of polarization, meaning the development of movements and bodies in opposition to each other. This pattern is certainly evident as the Arya Samaj expanded its network in the north-west, as it was shadowed by the development of 'orthodox' institutions, the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and their umbrella organization, the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal. As has been shown, orthodoxy is a somewhat complex idea in Hinduism: it must be understood in terms of local or regional frameworks, by reference to caste and *sampradaya* configurations. Indeed, it has also been illustrated that the transformative potential of reformism—the feature that distinguishes it as reforming—is based upon the challenge to this structural arrangement. Orthodoxy as symbolized by *sanatana dharma,* however, is a somewhat different idea, in that it seeks to project a monolithic establishment: orthodoxy in a pan-Hindu context, or, more appropriately, as a pan-Hindu constituency.

Recent work by Vasudha Dalmia has focused on the development of a modern image of orthodoxy in Benaras during the late 1860s and 1870s. In particular she has concentrated on the work of Bharatendu Harischandra and his attempts to formulate a standardized Vaishnavite approach to the 'true' form of Hindu belief and practice.[95] Harischandra fashioned his approach through his journals, and through his involvement in two organizations, the Kashi Dharma Sabha and the Tadiya Samaj. The Kashi Dharma Sabha had been instigated in the late 1860s by the Maharaja of Benaras, and Harischandra was its executive secretary during its early years. One of its principal concerns was the dispensation of *vyavasthas,* religious ordinances. This of course had long been a recognized function of individual *pandits,* guided by their own *sampradaya* -based theology. Dalmia states that the Maharaja sought to provide this system with an organized structure through the

establishment of the Dharma Sabha. She illustrates how the Sabha exercised its authority, mostly by making rulings on issues of ritual practice. These rulings were widely accepted, it would appear, due to their association with Benaras and the Maharaja, but the thrust of the organization is nevertheless clear: to establish a body with the authority to define correct or standard procedure within Hindu religion.

Because of its basis in the *vyavastha* tradition, the Sabha's authority encompassed ritual practice; Harischandra, however, was by the early 1870s more interested in establishing a doctrinal standard in Hinduism. He attempted to consolidate the doctrinal approach of key Vaishnavite *sampradayas* through the articulation of a common base in monotheism and *bhakti*.[96] The Tadiya Samaj was the organizational form for this. It is clear that Harischandra and his associates in the Tadiya Samaj were motivated by a concern for the predicament of Hinduism as a whole within the context of colonial rule. This concern was precisely expressed in 1872 as a need to counter the heterogeneity of Hinduism, which prevented the presentation of a united front, an effective 'Hindu public opinion'.[97] The colonial public space, then, was influential in the articulation of this formulaic orthodoxy. But it also drew on the traditional authority of the *sampradaya* structure, and the 'natural' authority of Benaras as the theological centre of Hinduism.

This sophisticated attempt to reformulate tradition in a modern, nationalist context is, I want to suggest, somewhat different to the approach of the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas that emerged in the late 1870s and to the idea of *sanatana dharma* as an unmediated symbol of orthodoxy. The latter, though no less modern, did not confront the issue of modernity in such a boldly self-conscious and focused way. In the Punjab Census Report for 1891, the Census Superintendent notes the tendency of 'orthodox Hindus...to record themselves as orthodox by sect'. Whilst specifying numbers returned as brahmachari (592), smartak (123) and karm kandi (838), he then goes on to comment that

> a still larger number were entered as Sanathan-dharmi, but I have not thought it worthwhile to record their numbers: the term merely implies that they belong to the 'old school', and it is generally used in contradistinction to the followers of the Arya Samaj. In Lahore City I found at the commencement of the preliminary enumeration that almost everybody who was not an Arya was being recorded as a Sanathan-dharmi, which was a view of the meaning of our 'sect-column' that would have deprived it of its main interest. The term is generally used now-a-days in contradistinction to the Aryas, and there are numerous societies and clubs which under this title do what they can to maintain the orthodox faith.[98]

Three points should be noted here, first, 'not being an Arya' is identified as the common characteristic of 'sanathan-dharmis'; second, the non-Arya Lahori Hindus, were *being recorded* as 'sanathan-dharmis', as opposed to positively stating their allegiance—this implies the conscious intervention of census enumerators, similar to that noted in Chapter 1 in the recording of Hindus in the Central Provinces; and third, 'numerous societies and clubs' are cited as 'maintaining the orthodox faith'. The Census Superintendent describes 'sanathan-dharmi' as an idea with little apparent substance, actively promoted by middle class agents and manifested in modern organizational forms. In addition, it may be said that the spread of this new formulation mirrored that of the Arya Samaj, as it is first mentioned in the Punjab report, before spreading to the United Provinces report somewhat later.[99] The simple image of a reactive, conservative force is nevertheless somewhat misleading. Pandit Shraddha Ram, the most prominent early 'Sanatani', was a proactive and by no means conventional campaigner. As early as 1875 he had established the Hindu Dharm Prakashik Sabha, 'dedicated to the defence of Hindu orthodoxy'. This organization was established in the specific context of Ludhiana, where Kanhya Lal Alakhdari's reformist Niti Prakash Sabha had been operating since 1873. Prior to this, however, he had been working in collaboration with Alakhdari in Amritsar on a campaign to purify Hindu practice. In addition, as early as 1874 he had performed several *shuddhi* ceremonies to reclaim converted Hindus.[100]

The establishment of the Ludhiana organizations is an early indication of the way in which nominally reformist and orthodox bodies developed together during this period. These organizations all recruited from the same pool of educated, profession-orientated middle castes—Khatris, Aroras, and Banias. From the outset, they were concerned not only with attacking or defending various aspects of ritual practice and social custom, but also with issues which engendered a consensus across the spectrum of organized, literate Hinduism in the public domain. Jones notes that it is often difficult to trace the development of the 'competing' networks of Arya and Sanatani organizations, because of the tendency to use the same terminology and the confluence of objectives among these organizations.[101] The classic notion of a furious debate between Aryas and Sanatanis over the issue of image worship is underwritten throughout this period by a consistent consensus on issues such as cow protection, the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi, the need to purify practice and curb expenditure on ritual, and, to a certain extent, the necessity of *shuddhi*.

How, then, did the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas distinguish themselves as orthodox? Unlike Harischandra's attempt to develop a homogenizing

doctrinal core, the Punjabi Sabhas generated doctrinal statements—beyond the vague invocation of *sruti-smriti* or *ved-upanishad-itihas-purana*—only in response to reformist concerns. No core theology was developed, to be referred to by any well-read Sanatani in a debate with an Arya. Instead, Sanatanis relied on learned individuals like Shraddha Ram to travel from district to district, refuting the arguments of Dayanand and other reformers as they arose. This is significant, because of the emphasis it placed on practice and structure—as opposed to doctrine—as the defining elements of Hindu tradition. The main areas of Arya criticism in the 1880s were image worship and the position of Brahmans in Hindu society. Consequently, image worship and established caste hierarchies were identified as core features of the tradition signified by *sanatana dharma*, and defended by Sanatana Dharma Sabhas.

This is reflected in the most ambitious projection of orthodoxy during the late nineteenth century, the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal. This organization first met at Hardwar in 1887, and is said to have been the work of Pandit Din Dayal Sharma.[102] Not surprisingly, given the prevalent mood, the government interpreted the Mahamandal as another manifestation of the cow protection movement.[103] It did, however, appear to have wider aims, projecting itself as a central umbrella organization for the network of Sanatana Dharma Sabhas that were by this time well established in Punjab and North Western Provinces. Promoting the second meeting of the Mahamandal in 1889, Sharma is reported to have publicized the expansion of the Sabha network from under 100 to more than 200 since the foundation of the Mahamandal. In addition, the organization was said to have preserved Sanskrit manuscripts by placing them in 'the libraries of the Dharma Sabhas'; improving 'old indigenous Sanskrit schools' and opening new ones; appointing 'learned Brahmins...to lecture on orthodox Hindu religion'; and generally making efforts to 'refute the new propaganda of the modern Hindu sects'.[104] These concerns were reiterated in a report prepared for the Mahamandal during 1889 under Sharma's supervision.[105] Criticizing the 'ignorance' of reformers, the report advocated religious and linguistic (Sanskrit) education, the translation of some 'doctrinal books' into vernaculars, and the protection of *varna dharma*. The spirit of Hinduism was to be preserved by the 'transmission of proper custom and the prevention of bad custom.'[106]

The Mahamandal developed into a Congress-style organization,[107] meeting fairly consistently on an annual basis, and attended by delegates representing affiliated Sabhas. It projected several Hindu Rajas as patrons

and figureheads of a revivified Hinduism. By 1902, the organization claimed as its constituency 'the whole of the orthodox classes of the Hindus in India.'[108] Subjects of discussion at the 1900 session of the Mahamandal, held at Delhi, again give an indication of the issues that defined this orthodoxy. The worship of images, use of 'Devanagri language', obedience due to *Pandits* and Brahmans, the lack of *Shastric* authority for widow remarriage, and the need for a Sanskrit College 'in which the old Hindu laws and c. were to be taught'.[109] The agenda, then, was dominated by issues of practice and structure; the lack of any doctrinal core is evident in this body representative of orthodoxy.

Defining Approaches to the Organization of Hinduism

The above examinations illustrate that reformist and orthodox positions, despite having a great deal in common and sharing the same 'broad "discursive field" of "Hindu" religious thought',[110] were nevertheless distinct at one level: the level of organization or structure. By this I mean not their own organization or structure, although this was to become a prominent issue in the development of the Hindu nationalist movement in the twentieth century. Rather, I am referring to their relationship with and attitude towards the organization or structure of Hinduism itself: how they perceived the 'shape' of the religion, and how this shape might evolve. As noted earlier, the pressures on Hinduism at this time were pressures which focused attention on this shape, in particular on the issue of caste. For Aryas, the main pressure was the threat of Christianity. They explained the evident success of Christian missionaries by focusing on two central factors: first, the passive, disorganized nature of Hinduism, with its proliferation of subcastes, which made it vulnerable to aggressive missionary activity; second, the oppression of certain groups as a result of this proliferation and the corrupt power of the Brahmans, which rendered these groups willing to accept Christianity. Both of these factors were underpinned by a subtext of the degeneration of Hinduism, its fall from the Vedic Golden Age. For the Sanatanis, both missionaries and reformers created the pressure, but the issues were essentially the same: the disorganized nature of Hinduism and the problem of low caste oppression. Again, this was a symptom of degeneracy in Hinduism, and the principal objective was to counter this degeneracy. The combined problems of disorganization and oppression had to be addressed, whilst at the same time defending the existing caste structure as a fundamental aspect of Hindu tradition.

The difference in approach of Aryas and Sanatanis to these problems is crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of Hindu politics as it

developed in the twentieth century. The Arya approach was based on its transformative potential. It meant working towards a *vertical* restructuring of society, reflecting Dayananda's interpretation of the Vedic notion of *varnashramadharma,* and the objective accessibility of the 'core' of Hinduism, the Vedic canon. Hinduism would be unified by means of an overhaul which would see the gradual diminution of the oppressive elements of the structure, bringing it progressively into line with the Vedic ideal—as we shall see, *shuddhi* was to become the principal means of achieving this overhaul. The Sanatani approach, on the other hand, had no doctrinal source. Indeed, its success depended on the relegation of doctrine to a position of secondary importance, as doctrinal difference was precisely what the idea of a pan-Hindu orthodoxy could not confront. Instead, it focused on a kind of *horizontal* binding together of the existing structure, driven by the notion that all castes have an organic role in Hindu society and therefore demand respect. Respect for low castes, untouchables, and women was accompanied by a commitment to an improvement of their conditions, but not a change in their status in relation to the rest of Hindu society.

The way in which this difference of approach was articulated is exemplified by the publication of a pamphlet entitled *An Old Hindu's Hope* in Calcutta early in 1889. The increasing sophistication of the public space is illustrated by the fact that this pamphlet had an impact across British India. It was reported at length, for example, in the Bombay-based Marathi/English weekly *Native Opinion* in May 1889.[111] The *Opinion* stated that the pamphlet laments the fissiparous tendencies of Hindu society, fuelled by caste and doctrinal antagonisms. As a remedy, it advocates unity 'under the banner inscribed with the words *Iswara o Matribhum*', God and Motherland. Unity should be given material form through the organization of a Maha Hindu Samiti, in which 'no sectarian religious discussion will be allowed. Only subjects relating to the religious rights and privileges of Hindus in general will be deemed legitimate subjects....' The pamphlet then goes on to list some such subjects: the promotion of Hindi and Devanagri, the protection of cows, the promotion of swadeshi, and the establishment of a Sanskrit University. Discussion of social questions, on the other hand, would be 'totally avoided', apart from those 'relating to sanitation, temperance, education, and c.' The *Opinion* rounds off its lengthy reportage by calling this 'a laudable undertaking' and opining that the Maha Hindu Samiti 'exists on paper only'. The Maha Hindu Samiti, then, is presented as a means of binding together Hindus under a common banner. What had already been identified as consensual issues

would form the basis of the Samiti's work, and neither 'sectarian (religious) interests' nor 'social questions' would be allowed to disrupt this work. In effect, the pamphlet is an articulation of the horizontal organization of Hinduism.

The Lahore-based *Tribune*, also reporting on the pamphlet in May 1889, presents a somewhat different approach to that of the approving *Native Opinion*.[112] The paper interpreted the proposition to avoid 'sectarian religious discussion' and exclude social issues not as a means of promoting unity, but rather as rendering the Maha Samiti 'altogether objectless':

> We should have seen some meaning in Old Hindu's proposals if he instead of practically excluding all religious questions and formally excluding all social questions, had made them the principal questions to be dealt with by his Maha Samiti. Such questions the National Congress cannot discuss, nor can Hindus, Mahommedans and Christians discuss such questions together. Such objects could only give a Hindu National Congress a *raison d'etre;* and we doubt not by discussing religious and social issues we could gradually introduce reform in the Hindu religious and social practices.

The *Tribune* does see a role for a pan-Hindu organization, which it articulates in the style of the Indian National Congress. The objective of this pan-Hindu organization, however, should be precisely to address the issues which are excluded in the objectives of the Maha Hindu Samiti. Here, then, is a divergent view of the perceived route to the organization of Hinduism. It is a view based on the vertical reorganization of the religion, expressed as the need to confront the issue of reform.

The language in both approaches is that of representation. The *Tribune's* reference to the Congress is indicative of its acceptance that a pan-Hindu body should be structured as a modern political organization, meaningful within the public space. Similarly, the direct reference to the 'rights and privileges' of Hindus in the pamphlet indicates how this notion of organization was projected as a means of promoting the status of Hindus as Subjects of the Queen, in the sense articulated in the Proclamation.[113] In both cases, the putative Samiti was cast as representing the interests of Hindus as a homogeneous group, recognizable within the framework of the colonial state.[114] This common idea of representation developed into a site of struggle between the two approaches, horizontal and vertical, as both sought to define the constituency of Hindus in consonance with these conflicting ideas of organization.

These developing perceptions of Hinduism, then, reflect the particular pressure of the discourse of organization in post-1857 India. Idioms of

representation emerged as a key facet of this discourse, encouraging the articulation of concerns as emanating from particular constituencies. In this context, the opposing ideas of orthodoxy and reformism were 'called into being' by each other, governed by what I have called a template of polarization.[115] This is not to deny the innovative zeal of such figures as Dayananda. Rather, it suggests that movements developed a specific significance within the public space: they were articulated as reformist or orthodox on the basis of the discourse of organization, and they were given meaning by the respective projection of modern, reforming and traditional, orthodox constituencies of Hindus. Both demanded the existence of the other in order to substantiate this position within the public space.

It is not surprising, then, that both types of organization were equally modern, and both focused on the same problem of the organization of Hinduism. The distinction between the two groups, exemplified here by the Arya Samaj and the Sanatana Dharma movement, lies in their approach to this problem. The distinction is that between vertical and horizontal organization: the alignment of the Arya Samaj in relation to Hinduism meant that it had the potential to effect a vertical restructuring of Hindu society, by transforming the nature of caste and its relationship to religiosity; the Sanatanis sought a horizontal 'binding together' of Hindu society, which implicitly accepted the established position of caste within it. This divergent approach was to have lasting impact on the development of Hindu politics.

Notes

1. W. Fusfield, 'Communal Conflict in Delhi: 1803–1930', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.19, no. 2, 1982, pp. 181–200: p. 187.
2. The ideological battle over India within the British establishment is well mapped out in Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, esp. Chapters 1 & 2.
3. 'Answers to Interrogatories of the Governor General to the Judges of Circuit and Zillah Judges, in Bengal; respecting the effects of the New System of Revenue, and of Judicial Administration; Papers on Police, Missionaries, Hindu Religion and Infanticide', *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1812–13*, vol. IX.1, p. 31; Straching makes a further interesting comment when he states that: 'Our government...appears to me very strong, and secure from serious internal commotion, although

the natives can hardly be said to be attached to it, for none of them understand it. No government ever stood more independent of public opinion' (p. 27).

4. This attitude is well illustrated by official comment during the debate over the criminalization of *sati*. British power, it was felt, was now a settled fact, and change could therefore be effected without fear of opposition. See, for example, the comment of R.N.C. Hamilton, Acting Magistrate of Benaras, in August 1826: 'At no period, since the introduction of European supremacy, has the British power been so exalted and permanently fixed as at the present; ...such a season, then, may surely be deemed peculiarly apt for the introduction of a law, having for its object the termination and extinction of the most revolting and most lamentable sacrifice....' 'Correspondence Relative to Burning of Hindoo Widows on the Funeral Piles of their Husbands', *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1830,* vol. XXVIII. 783, pp. 901–2.
5. I use the term 'Hinduism' here for clarity's sake, despite clearly anachronistic connotations. Defining Hinduism is still a matter of debate for contemporary academics; in the late eighteenth century it was a barely articulated concept.
6. See her 'Syndicated Moksha?', *Seminar,* no. 313, 1985, pp. 14–22: p. 22. For further accounts of the development of the term 'Hinduism' into a meaningful signifier of a particular religious tradition, and also on the etymology of 'Hindu' in general, see W.C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (SPCK, London, 1978), pp. 63–71; R.E. Frykenberg, 'Constructions of Hinduism at the Nexus of History and Religion', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* vol. 23, no. 3, 1993, pp. 523–50; H. von Stietencron, 'Relgious Configurations in Pre-Muslim India and the Modern Concept of Hinduism'; and the articles by Malik, von Stietencron, and Frykenberg in Sontheimer and Kulke (eds), *Hinduism Reconsidered.* On defining Hinduism in the context of contemporary Religious Studies, see B.K. Smith, 'Exorcising the Transcendent: Strategies for Defining Hinduism and Religion', *History of Religions*, vol. 27, 1987, pp. 32–55.
7. Plurality should be emphasized here; there was no single movement towards the expression of Hinduism as a given entity. This is a point which has recently been drawn out by Vasudha Dalmia: 'There were, in fact, many points of departure for the variant representations of Hinduism, as it was being articulated in the second half of the nineteenth century, each of which claimed equal validity.' See Dalmia, '"The Only Real Religion of the Hindus": Vaisnava Self-representation in the Late Nineteenth Century', Dalmia and von Stietencron, *Representing Hinduism,* pp. 176–210: p. 176.
8. Jaffrelot's 'stigmatise and emulate' model, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, constitutes one such process.

9. Bhagwan Josh, *The Struggle for Hegemony in India,* vol. 2 (Sage, New Delhi, 1992), p. 27.
10. Quoted in Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj,* p. 39.
11. See Josh, *The Struggle for Hegemony in India,* vol. 2, pp. 35–6.
12. On the limitations and ideological implications of the 'rule of law', see Guha, 'Dominance without Hegemony', pp. 275–7.
13. Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism* (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1966), p. 176.
14. See Katherine Prior, 'The British Administration of Hinduism' (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cambridge, 1990), pp. 80–6.
15. See *Taruna Maharashtra,* 14 July 1923, in Report on Indian Papers Published in the Central Provinces and Berar, 1923 (NAI).
16. S. Freitag, 'Collective Crime and Authority in North India', in A. Yang (ed.), *Crime and Criminality in British India* (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1985), pp. 140–64: p. 157.
17. Statements of Madras government officials quoted in M. Radhakrishnan, 'Surveillance and Settlements under the Criminal Tribes Act in Madras', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* vol. 29, no. 2, 1992, pp. 171–98: p. 176.
18. See A. Yang, 'Dangerous Castes and Tribes: The Criminal Tribes Act and the Magahiya Doms of Northeast India', in Yang (ed.), *Crime and Criminality in British India,* pp. 108–127: p. 116. The Bengal government classified 'sunnyassees' under the Act as 'religious mendicants who wander about the country (and who) live by begging, cheating and pilfering.'
19. On the implementation of the Criminal Tribes Act and its implications, see also S. Freitag, 'Crime and Criminality in the Social Order of Colonial North India', *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 25, no. 2, 1991, pp. 227–61; M. Radhakrishnan, 'The Criminal Tribes Act in Madras Presidency: Implications for Itinerant Trading Communities', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* vol. 26, no. 3, 1989, pp. 270–95.
20. See also Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India,* p. 8: 'Learning...must be considered a political process shaped by the character of domination.'
21. Bernard Cohn, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', in Ranajit Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies IV* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1985), pp. 276–329: p. 319.
22. See A. Misra, *Grants in Aid of Education in India* (Macmillan, Delhi, 1973), pp. 8–27.
23. Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva', pp. 281–2; some of these ideas were also developed in 'Colonial Times: Clocks and Kaliyuga in Nineteenth Century Bengal' (Seminar delivered at SOAS, London, 20 June 1996).

24. For work on the production of these images, see Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*; Inden, *Imagining India* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1990); Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995).
25. Quoted in B. Cohn, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', p. 289.
26. Quoted in ibid., p. 290.
27. M. Kishwar, 'Codified Hindu Law: Myth and Reality', *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 29, no. 33, 13 August 1994, pp. 2145–61: p. 2145
28. J.D.M. Derrett, *Religion, Law and the State in India* (Faber, London, 1968), pp. 232–4.
29. Ibid.
30. See Susan Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967), pp. 270–1.
31. i.e. as opposed to Muslims—as the *shastric* code was perceived as a religious code, it had to be matched by an equivalent code for Muslims, the *Sharia.* As the Rudolphs have pointed out, this was again problematic, particularly in Bengal, 'where most Muslims...were Hindu converts who often continued to use local Hindu law rather than Koranic and traditional law after their conversion,' ibid., p. 270.
32. Hinduism as a faith deliberately obscured by Brahmans was a common assumption in the eighteenth century. See, for example, Alexander Dow, 'A Dissertation Concerning the Hindoos', in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970), pp. 107–139; Dow speaks of the 'impenetrable veil of mystery with which the Brahmins industriously cover their religious tenets and philosophy', and notes that they are 'at so much pains to conceal (their faith) from foreigners' (pp. 107–8).
33. Nita Kumar, 'Sanskrit Pandits and the Modernisation of Sanskrit Education in the Nineteenth to Twentieth Centuries', in W. Radice (ed.), *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernisation of Hinduism,* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998), pp. 36–60: p. 52.
34. See Inden, *Imagining India,* p. 44.
35. D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969), pp. 38–9.
36. Both quoted in Metcalf , *Ideologies of the Raj,* p. 136.
37. See Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia, and Bipan Chandra, *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History* (People's Publishing House, Delhi, 1969); also Guha, 'Dominance without Hegemony', p. 288–290.
38. Queen Victoria to Lord Derby, 15/8/58, in C.H. Philips (ed.), *The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858–1947: Select Documents* (Oxford University Press, London, 1962), p. 10.

39. Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan,* p. 11.
40. *Bombay Telegraph and Courier,* 9 November 1858.
41. Speech by Ramgopaul Ghose, reported in *Bombay Telegraph and Courier,* 25 November 1858.
42. *Hindoo Patriot,* 11 November 1858; see B. Ghose, *Selections from English Periodicals of Nineteenth Century Bengal,* vol. V (Papyrus, Calcutta, 1980), p. 91.
43. Speech at 1892 Congress; see S. Banerjea, *Speeches,* vol. 4 (Calcutta, n.d.), p. 67.
44. The belief that outraged religious feelings constituted the principal motivation for the Rebellion was by no means reflected in indigenous press comment at the time, which tended to look towards British arrogance and the exclusivity of the administration as the principal cause; see, for example, articles in the *Hindoo Patriot* on 18 November and 9 December 1858, and 6 January 1859, quoted in Ghose, *Selections from English Periodicals,* pp. 97–110. Indeed, it should be emphasized that the Proclamation was not generally perceived as a panacea in the Indian press in 1858. In the context of continued unrest associated with the 1857 Rebellion, it received comparatively little attention in terms of editorials. As the earlier citation from Banerjea indicates, however, its significance was established for later reference.
45. Bepinchandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times* (1932), quoted in Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments,* pp. 11–13.
46. On *sati,* see L. Mani, 'The Production of an Official Discourse on *Sati* in Early 19th Century Bengal', *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 21, no. 17, 26 April 1986, pp. 32–40; and 'Contentious Traditions: The Debate on *Sati* in Colonial India', in K. Sangari and S. Vaid (eds): *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* (Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1989), pp. 88–126. For some interesting approaches to other issues relating to gender and religious rights, see S. Chandra, *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992), pp. 71–115; S. Chandra, 'Whose Laws?—Notes on a Nineteenth Century Hindu Case of Conjugal Rights', in V. Dalmia and H. von Stietencron (eds), *Representing Hinduism,* pp. 154–75.
47. See D.B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (Curzon Press, London, 1979), p. 69.
48. See *Census of India 1901,* vol. I, India, Pt 1: Report (Government Printing Office, Calcutta, 1903), pp. 387–92. The Bengal Report, for example, is quoted as noting that 'the classes most receptive of Christianity are those who are outside the Hindu system or whom Hinduism regards as degraded.'
49. For the former approach see G. Oddie, 'Christian Conversion in the Telugu Country 1860–1900: A Case of One Protestant Movement in

the Godavery–Krishna Delta', *Indian Economic and Social History Review,* vol.12, 1975, pp. 61–79; for the latter see Forrester, *Caste and Christianity,* Chapter IV, 'Caste and the Mass Movements', pp. 69–96.

50. A recent example is provided by G. Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996), see Chapter 11, 'Hinduism and the Modern World'.
51. Susan Bayly has recently commented on this kind of approach to nineteenth-century Hindu reformism: 'So-called Hindu revivalism has...been viewed teleologically as a "modernising" Protestant-style reformation launched against a Catholic-style Hindu establishment.' S. Bayly, 'Hindu modernisers and the "Public" Arena: Indigenous Critiques of Caste in Colonial India', in W. Radice, *Swami Vivekananda,* pp. 93–137: p. 135.
52. J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1967; first published Macmillan, 1915); Jones calls this book 'the single authoritative source on socio-religious movements since its publication'—see *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989), p. 228; an interesting critique of Farquhar's work and its influence can be found in P. Lutgendorf, *The Life of a Text: Performing the Ramcaritmanas of Tulsidas* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991), pp. 360–2.
53. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India,* pp. 431, 445.
54. Ibid., p. 43.
55. For example, on the development of the idea of individual communion with God, often identified as the most fundamental contribution of the West or Christianity to Hindu reformism, see C. Mackenzie–Brown, 'Purana as Scripture: From Sound to Image of the Holy Word in the Hindu Tradition', *History of Religions,* vol. 26, no. 1, 1986–7, pp. 68–86. See also Sheldon Pollock's comments on pre-colonial debates over the scriptural legitimacy of *sati,* in his 'Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj', in C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (eds), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1993), pp. 76–133: pp. 100–1.
56. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India,* p. 3.
57. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
58. See ibid., pp. 184–209, 218–21.
59. A different approach is taken by Vasudha Dalmia, in her *Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions.* Dalmia lists (pp. 7–8) five points of broad similarity and difference between reformers and what she calls traditionalists. This instructive list refers, however, to two groups that are consciously concerned with the predicament of Hinduism in the modern world. The approach I am taking here refers to the relationship between reform and the objective, impersonal structure of established Hinduism.

60. See K.W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab* (Manohar, Delhi, 1976), p. 37
61. See Bayly, 'Hindu Modernisers and the "Public" Arena'; here, reformers and non-reformers are shown to have 'continually borrowed from and interacted with one another, all sharing in the same broad "discursive field" of Hindu religious thought and practice', p. 135. See also Dalmia, *Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions,* p. 5: 'Many of the positions occupied by the votaries of sanatana dharma were commonly shared with the leaders of the reform movements.' For an interesting example of this blend of traditional and modern, see F. Conlon, 'The Polemic Process in Nineteenth–century Maharashtra: Vishnubawa Brahmachari and Hindu Revival' in K. Jones (ed.), *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages,* (SUNY, Albany, 1992), pp. 5–26.
62. See especially A. Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change: The Role of Sects in Hinduism', in Sontheimer and Kulke, *Hinduism Reconsidered,* pp. 108–20); and K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism,* pp. 46–50.
63. *Sampradaya* may be translated literally as 'what is handed over'; it indicates a religious tradition founded by a sage or saint, extant in a religious order.
64. See Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism,* p. 59; Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', p. 112.
65. Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', p. 111.
66. For example, the core of Virashaiva teaching is its refusal to recognize the concept of ritual pollution. Nevertheless, Virashaivas operate within the caste system and even recognize caste distinctions among themselves. Virashaivas have in effect been encompassed by the system their teachings have sought to repudiate, and now operate as a separate caste or set of sub-castes in their own right. See C. Parvathamma, *Politics and Religion: A Study of Historical Interaction between Socio-political Relationships in a Mysore Village* (Sterling, New Delhi, 1971).
67. Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', pp. 116–17.
68. See Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements,* pp. 131–5.
69. See also A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (eds), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (Manohar, Delhi, 1978), pp. 389–90.
70. See Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', p. 117.
71. See F.L. Damen, *Crisis and Religious Renewal in the Brahmo Samaj 1860–1884* (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, 1983), p. 25.
72. See, for example, Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements,* p. 32.
73. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance,* p. 271.
74. See D. Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979), p. 162.
75. The ideological proximity of the Brahmo Samaj and the Dharma Sabha which this template of polarization tended to obscure was nevertheless

evident in the late 1840s, when the two organizations collaborated to establish the Hindu Charitable Association as a counter to missionary educational advances. In this Association, the President of the executive board was Radhakanta Deb (the leading figure of Dharma Sabha 'orthodoxy'), while the Secretary was Debendranath. Here, in a sense, was an early indication of the tendency to symbolize the 'community of Hindus' by establishing a spectrum of representatives in one organization. See Chapter 4 on this tendency in the Hindu Sabha movement.

76. Lajpat Rai, *A History of the Arya Samaj* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1992), pp. 54–55. It should be noted, however, that Dayananda specified equal access as a necessity in the contemporary, 'fallen' state of Hinduism; if society were properly structured (i.e. according to the four *Varnas*) then Shudras would be denied the right to study the Vedas. See J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda Saraswati: His Life and Ideas* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978), p. 104.
77. See Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements,* p. 96; Gold, 'Organised Hinduisms', pp. 542–4; Dayananda Saraswati (Ed: C. Bharadwaja), *Light of Truth or An English Translation of Satyarth Prakash* (Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, New Delhi, 1975), p. 733.
78. The idea of a canon of sacred literature was not alien to Hinduism. Anncharlotte Eschmann perceives an existing canon in Hinduism, consisting of 'two parts, the second of which—astonishing *[sic]* enough—still remains unfinished'. The difference is that the second 'part' of the canon, the *Smriti* canon (including the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, etc.), is an open, flexible canon that encourages change in Hinduism; See Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', p. 114. By contrast, the nature of Dayananda's canon was closed, fixed by its insistence on Vedic authority.
79. Dayananda, *Light of Truth,* p. 103.
80. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 13–17; see also his 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building'.
81. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 16.
82. Jaffrelot, 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building', p. 519.
83. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 15; see also 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building', p. 519.
84. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 15.
85. In the sense that this 'pretending' in the English edition of *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* may be a mistranslation of *'pretendre'* from Jaffrelot's original French publication *Les Nationalistes Hindoues* (Presses de la Foundation Nationales des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1993).
86. Dayananda Saraswati, *Light of Truth,* pp. 469–70.
87. See R. Kumar, 'The Rowlatt Satyagraha in Lahore', in Kumar, *Essays in the Social History of Modern India,* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983),

pp. 148–212: p. 156; n.b. English education had not been instituted in the Punjab until 1856.

88. J.R. Graham, 'The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism with Special Reference to Caste' (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale, 1942), p. 197; an English transcript of the Ten *Niyams* can be found in Jones, *Arya Dharm,* Appendix 1, p. 321.
89. Quoted in ibid., p. 321.
90. See, for example, Jordens, *Dayananda Saraswati,* p.175; Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 37.
91. See Lajpat Rai, *A History of the Arya Samaj,* pp.158–9.
92. Ibid., p. 157.
93. Quoted in Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* pp. 87–8.
94. See Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', p. 112.
95. See Dalmia, *The Nationalisation of Hindu Tradition;* and also her two articles: 'The Only Real Religion of the Hindus', and 'The Modernity of Tradition: Harischandra of Banaras and the Defence of Hindu Dharma', in Radice, *Swami Vivekananda,* pp. 77–92.
96. See Dalmia, 'The Only Real Religion of the Hindus', pp. 188–9.
97. 'Public Opinion in India', an editorial published in Hariscandra's journal *Kavivacansudha,* quoted at length in Dalmia, 'The Only Real Religion of the Hindus', p. 186–7.
98. *Census of India 1891,* vol. XIX, Punjab and its Feudatories, Pt. 1: Report (Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1892), pp. 171–2.
99. Its sudden popularity evidently still baffled the Punjab Census Superintendent in 1901, as he states 'How the phrase has become so widespread I cannot explain'; *Census of India 1901,* vol. XVII, Punjab and its Feudatories, and the North–West Frontier Province, Pt.1: Report (Government Central Printing, Simla, 1902), p.115. First mention in the UP Census Report is in 1911, when 8861 were returned as sanatana dharmis by sect, and the Superintendent noted: 'The phrase is used chiefly in opposition to the Arya Samaj...All but 25 are found in the three western divisions where Aryaism is most prevalent....' See *Census of India 1911,* vol. XV, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, pt. 1 (Superintendent Government Printing, Allahabad, 1912), p. 131.
100. Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 28. *Shuddhi* was performed by Shraddha Ram at Sialkot, Mian Mir, Jullundar, Phagwara, Phillaur, Ludhiana, Ambala, and Saharanpur. For further detail on Shraddha Ram, see Jones, 'Two Sanatan Dharma Leaders and Swami Vivekananda: A Comparison', in Radice, *Swami Vivekananda,* pp. 224–43: pp. 225–32.
101. See Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 111, n. 56.
102. See 'Proposed Deputation of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Society to the King's Coronation', Foreign Department, Internal, B Progs, June 1902, nos 112–14 (NAI).

103. See ibid., which states that the Mahamandal was founded 'in connection with kine killing' and notes that Din Dayal 'has done all in his power to prevent kine killing'; on the cow protection movement, see Chapter 3.
104. *Bharat Bandhu* (Aligarh), 28 December 1888; quoted in Selections from Vernacular Newspapers: North Western Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces, Central India and Rajputana, 1889.
105. The report was prepared by Pandit Nand Kishore Dev Sharma and Bhairav Shri Krishna Prasad. See Jones, 'Two Sanatan Dharma Leaders and Swami Vivekananda', pp. 235–6.
106. See ibid., p. 237.
107. The *Mahratta* notes on 6 March 1892 that the constitution of the Mahamandal 'closely resembles that of the National Congress'.
108. Letter from Rai Baroda K. Lahiri, Secretary, Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, Aligarh, to Chief Secretary to the United Provinces Government, 31 March 1902; Home Department, Public, A Progs, May 1902, no. 260 (NAI).
109. Extract from CSB Abstract No. 35, dated 5 December 1900, quoted in Foreign Department, Internal, B Progs, June 1902, Nos 112–14 (NAI).
110. The observation is Susan Bayly's, 'Hindu Modernisers and the "Public" Arena', see n. 61.
111. *Native Opinion,* 16 May 1889.
112. *Tribune,* 18 May 1889.
113. Interestingly, *The Tribune* reacts strongly to Old Hindu's citation of rights and privileges, summoning up the spirit of the Proclamation in the process: 'Why,' it asks, 'has anyone assailed these rights and privileges? We live under the tolerant government of England, under which the meanest man can and does practise his own religion in perfect safety. There is no forcing of beef down the Hindu's throat now, nor ham down the Mahomedans.'
114. This idea of representation was also at the heart of a debate engendered by the response of the *Hindu* daily to the pamphlet (see especially the editorial in the *Hindu* on 10 May 1889). The newspaper's criticism of the idea of a Maha Hindu Samiti being dominated by orthodoxy prompted 'Old Hindu' himself to intervene. His letter to the *Hindu* commented: 'If the majority of [the Samiti's] members do not belong to [the orthodox] class, it would have no representative character, as men holding heterodox opinions constitute but a fraction of the Hindu community of India.' Reproduced in *Indian Mirror,* 22 May 1889.
115. A similar idea is suggested by Dalmia in relation to the self-image of 'traditionalists'/sanatanis:

> The nineteenth century social and religious leadership, specially when defending sanatana dharma, developed its own deliberately antiquarian vocabulary to designate

its priorities and preferences, and equally deliberately, it set itself off from the modern. The tradition/modernity polarity, used to establish the distinction between the indigenous and the alien, was a part of the self-representation of those who sought to depict their tradition as standing firm against the pressure of change. Yet to accept these poles as genuinely apart and immune to the influence of the other would be contrary to all the evidence presented in the documents of the period, which bear witness to incessant change and exchange. [*Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions,* p. 5.]

3

Indian Nationalism and Representations of Hinduism towards the End of the Nineteenth Century

The pattern of ideas about the organization of Hinduism began to establish itself from about the 1870s onwards. In this chapter I want to look at the implementation of these ideas; how they were articulated towards the end of the nineteenth century as concrete movements. Two particular movements will be examined as indicative of the divergent approaches—horizontal and vertical—formulated during this period: first, the cow protection movement, which swept across much of north, west, and central India during the 1880s and early 1890s; and second, the *shuddhi* movement, which became increasingly significant as an issue of both social reform and politics from the late 1880s onwards.

These movements must be placed in the context of the emerging ideology of elite-led Indian nationalism. Ideas of organization and representation were also significant factors in the shaping of this ideology. As well as reflecting the continued elaboration and expansion of colonial public space during the final three decades of the nineteenth century, the way in which Indian nationalism established itself in this environment demonstrated progression towards a particular understanding of the nature of the colonial state and how to confront it. The consequent development of Indian nationalist strategy was to have significant ramifications for the articulation of Hindu organization in the same environment.

The Development of Nationalist Organization

It is now well understood that the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was neither a sudden event nor the work solely of an

individual Englishman (A.O. Hume) hoping to provide a 'safety valve' for volatile political aspirations.[1] Recent accounts have presented it as a significant act in a rather diffuse process of elite political formation during the 1860s and 1870s.[2] Two of the most significant political organizations to emerge during this period were the Sarvajanik Sabha and the Indian Association. It was these organizations which did much to establish the Maharashtra–Bengal axis that characterized the Congress in its early phase.

The Sarvajanik Sabha was established in Poona in 1870 with a significant membership criterion. This was that each member was required to hold a letter of representation, signed by fifty men from Poona and surrounding districts, who appointed the member to act as their spokesman in the dealings of the Sabha. This criterion meant that the Sabha had a tangible representative base, albeit within a very limited social context. By 1871, the Sabha could confidently claim to represent the views of some 17,000 citizens of Poona.[3] This representative quality was not appreciated by the Bombay government, a view reflected in an article on the Sabha in the *Englishman:* 'It is well to realise that we are not yet prepared to govern India by means of popular representation, and that anything which approaches to a *bona fide* representative body will necessarily exercise a power incompatible with the existing system of administration.'[4] In consonance with this view, the government kept a close watch on the Sabha and subjected it to mild harassment during the 1870s.[5]

The trajectory of the Indian Association, established in Calcutta in 1876, indicates by contrast why the Sarvajanik Sabha was treated so suspiciously by the government. Surendranath Banerjea, the prominent Calcuttan moderate and architect of the Association, described its aim as 'to represent the views of the educated middle class community and inspire them with a living interest in public affairs.'[6] At the same time, the Association had as one of its principal objectives the 'unification of the Indian races and peoples upon the basis of common political interests and aspirations'.[7] The most important phase of this activity came a year after the Association's foundation, when Secretary of State, Lord Salisbury, reduced the maximum age limit for entrants in the ICS examination. This effectively discriminated against Indians hoping to gain entry to the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. During the summer of 1877 Banerjea was sent as 'special delegate' of the Indian Association on a lecture tour to galvanize 'public' protest against the measure. As a result, says Banerjea, organizations similar to the Indian Association were formed 'at Lahore, Meerut, Allahabad, Cawnpore and Lucknow.

Thus a network of organisations was started, and the foundations were well and truly laid...for united and concerted action among our representative men, over an area extending from Calcutta to Lahore.'[8]

This rather limited political initiative, then, was replete with representative idioms. The Association was founded in order to represent 'the educated middle class community', which in turn was assumed to represent 'the political interests and aspirations' of the Indian people as a whole. When Banerjea embarked on his lecture tour he was sent as 'special delegate', and the organizations subsequently set up in cities across the northern plains were constituted by 'representative men'. The symbolic invocation of representation was persistently expressed as central to the self-image of the Association, in order to give it meaning within the public space in which it operated. Precisely because of this symbolic character, the representative claims of the Indian Association did not attract the same opprobrium as those of the Sarvajanik Sabha; they were not 'incompatible with the existing system of administration', because they were expressed within the parameters of the discourse of organization.

This same pattern is evident in the Congress. In its early years this organization had little infrastructure; it was simply a collection of prominent professional people, as well as some landowning and commercial men, who gathered every year 'in what became a great social occasion as well as a political assembly'.[9] The proceedings of the Congress, were nevertheless 'conducted democratically, issues being decided through debate and discussion and occasionally through voting'.[10] Representation again assumes a symbolic quality in this context.

This is not to say that the Congress or many of the individuals that energetically pursued nationalist politics during the 1880s and 1890s were not genuinely concerned about the plight of the country. Several historical studies have illustrated the sophisticated and trenchant nature of what is known as the 'moderate' critique of colonialism, particularly in relation to economic exploitation.[11] Moderate ideology is rather distinguished from later positions through its perception of the colonial state. Moderates such as Banerjea and G.K. Gokhale were convinced by the hegemonic claim of the state, that it operated ultimately in the interests of the Indian people. There was a conviction that the Imperial mission as articulated in Victoria's Proclamation was a legalistic principle —Banerjea's 'Magna Carta'—at the heart of British rule. 'If it is at once admitted,' Banerjea stated in 1877, 'that she [Britain] has no mission here, we are driven to the conclusion that the English Empire rests not upon the principles of justice and truth, or upon the willing allegiance of a subject people, but upon pure, simple, unmitigated brute force.'[12]

The mission was the basis of Banerjea's loyalty and his vision of the British Indian state as lawful, constitutional, and ruling in the interests of the people. The fact that the state did not generally live up to these principles of justice and truth was an exasperating feature of the colonial predicament. In an editorial in the *Bengalee* in 1898, Banerjea noted that 'the peculiar character of the struggle is that we are fighting with Englishmen for the preservation of English principles in the government of the country, and the bureaucracy is apparently resolved to fall back upon oriental methods in the government of an oriental country.'[13] The complaint, then, is of the difference between the professed lofty projections of liberal imperialism and the material existence of colonial government. It is a virtual recognition of the limitations of the colonial hegemonic project. At the same time, this recognition is articulated entirely in hegemonic terms: the characterization of oppressive government as 'oriental'—the 'Other' of western lawful and constitutional government—being an integral feature of colonial discourse.[14] What is indicated here is the intimate relation between moderatism and the hegemonic arrangement of the state. One might even characterize this moderatism as a kind of 'hegemonic nationalism', through which nationalists expressed their objectives in consonance with models of progression articulated by the state, as symbolic representatives of the people.[15]

Shifts in Nationalist Strategy: The Search for Contact in the 1890s

Almost immediately, however, some elements of the Indian national movement began to diverge from this 'hegemonic nationalism', challenging the parameters of the discourse of organization in the process. The work of the Maharashtrian nationalist B.G. Tilak during the 1890s illustrates this development. Tilak's career has been studied by several historians. Nationalist historiography has viewed him as an icon of the freedom struggle—the first nationalist to genuinely reach out to the people.[16] Some western historians have been rather more critical, viewing his work, particularly in relation to the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals, as irresponsible dabbling in religio-political mobilization.[17] This view recalls the imperialist commentator Valentine Chirol, who cites the Ganapati festival in his *Indian Unrest* as a prime example of Tilak's 'reactionary' politics, an unethical and power hungry appeal to 'popular superstitions'.[18] In more recent years some historians, pursuing the lead of the Subaltern Studies group, have decried this emphasis on Tilak's work altogether, citing its narrow focus on movements which were elite-

led, with its implication that without elite agency subaltern consciousness remained mute or irrationally violent.[19]

Although I find this complaint eminently justifiable, it should by now be clear that I am not prepared to accept that the history of elites (as opposed to elite historiography) is rendered insignificant by Subaltern Studies. Tilak's actions during the 1890s demand attention, precisely because of their ramifications in the realm of elite-led politics. These ramifications, however, do not revolve around the notion of Tilak's supposed manipulation of subaltern consciousness—'raising the demon', as it were, of some supposedly innate Hindu or Marathi chauvinism—but rather around his exploration of new methods of political representation in the public space of colonial India. Tilak's work began to challenge the accepted discursive structure of how a public organization should operate; a structure which accommodates all the organizational forms—both political and religious—examined so far.

Tilak turned his attention to the Ganapati festival in Poona in 1894. The festival is an annual event popular in Maharashtra, which celebrates the elephant-headed deity Ganesh. Tilak's intervention aimed to infuse the festival with a political message, and he attempted to effect this through a positive restructuring of the way the festival was celebrated. The central feature of this restructuring was to encourage celebration at a community level (i.e. neighbourhood or caste communities), as opposed to the more established emphasis on an extended family or immediate neighbourly basis.[20] To use Freitag's terminology, this was an elite attempt to mobilize support on the basis of collective identity formed in the public arena.[21] Within this 'popularized' context, Tilak introduced the familiar concept of *melas*, or singing parties, designed to deliver the 'messages' which would provide political direction to the festival.

Once this basic restructuring had been established, the festival was left largely to shape itself at local level. Although a central coordinating body was formed in 1896, caste or neighbourhood Ganapati committees were left to their own devices, collecting their own subscriptions and organizing their own leadership and *melas*. This would suggest that the politicization of Ganapati did indeed have a subaltern element. As a project of the nationalist elite, it is clear that it was perceived by Tilak as an alternative to the structure of politics within Congress:

> This work will not be as strenuous and expensive as the work of Congress. The educated people can achieve results through these national festivals which it would be impossible for the Congress to achieve.... Will it not be possible for political activities to enter the humblest cottages of the villages through such means?[22]

Considering the urban nature of the movement, this was a somewhat ambitious claim, but it nevertheless illustrates the way in which Ganapati was perceived as a means of extending the representative quality of nationalism.

This may again be perceived in Tilak's attempts to launch a movement in the name of Shivaji, the Maratha hero who resisted Mughal expansion in the Deccan in the late seventeenth century.[23] The Shivaji movement was launched on the basis of a call to restore and renew the dilapidated memorial to Shivaji at Raigad. As well as appealing to princely states, Tilak conducted a campaign through his Marathi newspaper *Kesari* to encourage popular donation to the restoration fund. Even the smallest donations were acknowledged in the columns of *Kesari,* and this strategy proved enormously successful. Of the sum of Rs 15,000 collected by the end of 1895, as much as 80 per cent was received in contributions under one rupee. The total number of contributions amounted to nearly 60,000.[24] The significance of these figures is articulated by Tilak in connection with the Paisa Fund, which was initiated in 1900 on the same principle as the Shivaji fund: 'The Paisa Fund teaches all people how to utilise their money and bodily power to the national object.... When these two things are yoked to any wagon, no official class will have in its hands the power to stop the motion of that wagon.'[25]

The fund-raising principle is articulated here as a means of raising levels of consciousness; its significance lies not so much in the achievement of the objective, as in the educative and consciousness-raising functions of individual commitment. As with the Ganapati movement, the emphasis was on mobilizing interest and support for elite-led nationalism in non-elite sectors of the population, and so reifying the idea of a nationalist constituency—increasing the legitimacy of elite claims to represent the people.

Ultimately, both the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals were limited as political movements by the lack of adequate infrastructure. This was a point which Tilak himself evidently acknowledged, as much of his later work was based on the expansion and use of effective political networks. What it illustrates here is the development of elite nationalist strategy—moving away from the symbolic representation that characterized the hegemonic nationalism of the moderates, and towards an attempt to raise consciousness and so expand the nationalist constituency, legitimizing the representative claims of middle class political leaders. Movements along these lines could not be accommodated by the state's definition of what constituted political activity, and the state was soon to strike back against the representative claims of Indian nationalists. This pattern

of activity was to have profound impact on the organization of Hinduism as a political force.

Undermining Ideas of Hindu Organization

Certain other factors during this period were increasing the pressure on Hinduism to organize as an ideological entity, by implicitly questioning the parameters of the putative community. Before examining Hindu movements themselves, therefore, I will examine two of these factors as of definitive significance: the growing impact of the census and the increasing prominence of low caste mobilization.

The Census and the Taxonomy of Hinduism

The decennial All India Census was instituted in 1871. From the beginning, it was clear that the whole idea of Hinduism as a viable category in the framework of colonial ethnography was problematic. Quantifying Hinduism, defining its limits, emerged as consistently perplexing. Attempts to gain a full picture of religious affiliation for the census of 1881, for example, were seriously hampered by confusion over what constituted inclusion in the Hindu religion. The 1881 Report states that: 'there were instances where the column in the enumerator's schedule, in which religion should have been entered, was filled up, not with any designation of any known religion, but with either the name of a caste or the title of a sect.'[26]

This practice was so prevalent in Central Provinces that Drysdale, the Provincial Census Superintendent, felt it necessary to list a large number of responses, grouping them under his own title of 'Hindu'. The list consisted of thirty castes, four sects, eight devotional groups, and five groups that the Superintendent could only categorize as 'others'.[27] The Report also records the remarks of Mr Kitts, Census Superintendent for Berar, who first complains of the 'vagueness of the term Hindoo' and then goes on to describe the sometimes farcical attempts to pin down the affiliation of certain hill tribes:

> When the hill people were pressed for a reply as to what their religion was, sometimes after much parleying, they said either they were Hindoos, or that they knew nothing about religion; that they were *arani log,* ignorant people. All they knew was, they were Korkus by caste.... Nowhere, as far as I can discover, did a single individual assert that there was such a distinct and separate thing as a Korku religion; he merely answered to the effect 'I am a Korku, but I do not know what my religion is called. I worship Mahadeo, Hunuman, Byram-Bai, Chand, Suraj and the Bhagwant, who is the author of my religion, call it what you please.'[28]

The state and its representatives, then, faced a problem which was created specifically by the Orientalist perception of Hinduism. On the basis of this perception, Hinduism should have been a recognizable, material feature of Indian society. The census revealed that this was by no means a settled fact. The blurred boundary between Hinduism and animism illustrates this point. Kitts' exasperation at the inability of hill tribes to define their religion, or even to *care* about how it should be defined ('call it what you please'), is indicative of the uncertainty with which these two categories were applied.

The report on the 1901 census reiterated the problem. The Central Provinces Superintendent R.V. Russell commented irascibly on the proclaimed Hinduism of the rural population of Seoni district that 'whether they are Vaishnavas, or Shaivas, or Shaktas, they know as much as the man in the moon does.'[29] Russell attempted to bypass the problem by defining contemporary Hinduism as 'not so much a religion as a social system', which was governed by caste. This led him to suggest that: 'as to the religion of the majority of the people who are called Hindus, if they can be said to have one religion at all, it would appear to be more correct to consider it as Animism than anything else.'[30] Popular religious belief, then, 'resemble[d] generally the religion or the superstitions of any other comparatively primitive races', the only difference being that 'they are more numerous and complex because the population is large.'[31] This view virtually consigned contemporary Hinduism—as a religion—to the status of a historical residue, with Russell concluding that 'the Hindus of the present day are more backward than their forefathers, whose beliefs are portrayed in the Vedic hymns.'[32] The conclusion indicates the trajectory of Russell's analysis. He attempts to follow the logic of the duality of Hinduism proposed by the Orientalists, locating the normative form of the religion in Vedic antiquity. Not unnaturally, therefore, he concludes by claiming that Hinduism is practised only 'at a few of the great religious centres', with the majority of the population having 'regressed' to a semi-primitive animism. Even for Russell this was too radical a conclusion to articulate statistically, and he goes on to explain that in practise he instructed his enumerators to record a person as Hindu 'if [he] said he worshipped Mahadeo..., and if he revered the tribal gods, the name of the tribe was to be entered in the column of religion.'[33]

This practical uncertainty over the boundary between Hinduism and animism was exacerbated by the actions of some high caste enumerators, whose inclination was to actively exclude low castes and tribals from a Hindu identity. This is evident in a passage already quoted from the

1881 Report (see Chapter 1) where Superintendent Drysdale notes 'numerous instances' of low caste Hindus being recorded as 'of the Dher, Mang or Chandal religion by mere repetition of their caste in the column for religion'. This occurred partly as a result of the 'humility and ignorance' of the said low castes, and partly because 'bigoted high caste Hindoos employed as census enumerators or supervisors objected to record such low persons as of the Hindoo religion'.[34] As with Russell, a specific perception of what constitutes Hinduism is at work here. Drysdale configured Hinduism as a system with definable limits, which in this case clearly encompassed low caste groups such as Dhers, Mangs, and Chandals. These limits of Hinduism were only obscured for the Superintendent by the characteristic 'bigotry' or 'ignorance' of its various adherents.

Whatever the assumptions of officials like Drysdale, however, the questioning of social and religious relations by the subject peoples is implicit in the operation of the census. Low caste groups were forced to consider the relationship between their own sense of religious reality and the imperceptible, macrocosmic notion of Hinduism. High caste elites, like the enumerators cited above, were forced to confront the question of the limits of their religious community. If Hinduism was to be perceived objectively, as a world religion or great religious tradition, where precisely did this tradition end and the morass of 'primitive' animism and superstition begin?[35]

In the present context, two dilemmas for elite Hindus emerged which are particularly interesting. First, the census highlighted the dilemma of how to project a positive image of Hinduism in a world religious context if it was characterized by a caste system which was manifestly oppressive. This was exactly the dilemma addressed by the reform movements and by the development of the idea of a vertical reorganization of Hinduism which would eradicate this oppressive element. The second dilemma was far more widely experienced, and was far more specifically a political dilemma. By quantifying caste and religious communities, the census inevitably placed the emphasis on numerical size as a means of assessing political importance. As we shall see, the 'communal principle' introduced in the Morley–Minto Reforms of 1909 confirmed this trend. Limiting the size of Hinduism by rejecting the 'Hinduness' of low caste and untouchable groups, or indeed by questioning the practical validity of Hinduism as a category of religion altogether, in the manner of Russell, was hence a threat to the political influence of high caste Hindus.

This was precisely the dilemma addressed by the putative orthodoxy of the late nineteenth century, and by the development of the idea of

horizontal reorganization, making the ties between high caste and low caste, urban and rural an explicit, if not positive, feature of Hindu tradition.

A Challenge to Middle Class Pretensions

Insecurity over the numerical size of the Hindu religion was exacerbated by the increasing prominence of low caste mobilization towards the end of the nineteenth century.[36] Again, this was particularly a feature of western India, where low caste traditions were buttressed by the growing strength of the supra-caste Maratha identity amongst cultivating castes.[37] As with general religious reform movements, it is important to emphasize the fact that low caste movements *per se* were by no means a new phenomenon in the late nineteenth century. What was new, however, was the notion of low caste mobilization through the singularly colonial avenue of social reform. Social reform meant addressing issues of customary practice—the position of widows, child marriage, female infanticide, low caste oppression, to name but a few—without necessarily invoking a religious justification. Social questions had of course been a feature of religious reform movements throughout the nineteenth century, and in practice it is difficult to distinguish the two (hence the epithet 'socio-religious reform'), as any attempt to effect social reform had inevitable ramifications within Hinduism.

A conceptual distinction is nevertheless evident. An example is provided by the pamphlet examined in Chapter 2, *An Old Hindu's Hope*. Although the author stated that all issues which may disrupt the unity of the proposed Maha Hindu Samiti should be disallowed, he nevertheless felt constrained to categorize these issues: 'sectarian religious questions' were articulated separately from 'social' questions. This conceptual separation was very much a ramification of the duality of Hinduism under colonial conditions. Hinduism as a religion was tied to a series of texts, which in turn produced the series of intellectual and spiritual traditions of Brahmanical history. 'Social' issues, on the other hand, were a feature of the degeneracy that affected both contemporary society and religious practice. The state relied on this separation to make incursions into contemporary practice, whilst maintaining the policy of neutrality in relation to religion.

In the present context, one central characteristic of social reform during this period is significant: motivation and leadership of indigenous initiatives was almost entirely confined to the middle class. Tilak's objection to the strong links between the Social Conference and the Congress during the mid-1890s is indicative of this point. The two held their

annual sessions in the same *pandal,* and many Congressmen also attended the Conference. Tilak's complaint was that the Social Conference was so strongly identified with the elite that it was positively detrimental to the nationalist objective of widening its constituency. In 1895, when the joint Congress/Conference sessions were to be held in Poona, Tilak commented: 'If we could be convinced that the conference could do any good even to a microscopic minority of the masses, we should be content to leave it alone.'[38] As a concern of the elite, however, it could not have this effect. It could not therefore be accommodated as part of Tilak's programme for the expansion of nationalism.

Tilak's dismissal of social reform, however, was challenged by the work of Jotirao Phule and other low caste reformers of the late nineteenth century. Phule was born in 1827; his family belonged to the Mali caste, a cultivating caste ranking as Shudra in the *varna* scheme.[39] He was educated in mission schools, and as early as 1848 he opened a school for low caste girls in Poona. Over the following decades he launched and developed a network of reform projects, largely in the area of low caste education. This work was underpinned by the steady development of an ideology of positive low caste identity, based on the projection of ancient Shudra and *adi*-Shudra (untouchable) nobility, destroyed by high caste oppression. In his 1875 publication *Slavery,* Phule reinterprets the coming of Aryan civilization as the beginning of this caste oppression. Shudras and *adi*-Shudras were presented as the Kshatriyas of a previous age, downtrodden by the Aryan invaders. In this perception of Hindu history, the Golden Age was relocated as the pre-Aryan realm of Kshatriyas under the benign rule of King Bali. The Shudras and *adi*-Shudras were presented as the true descendants of this Golden Age.[40]

In effect, Phule retains the structure of Orientalist discourse on Indian history—an enormously influential discourse, as we have seen, amongst middle class, high caste Hindus—but completely inverts its meaning to emphasize low castes as the original, hence 'genuine', inhabitants of the subcontinent. This strategy implicitly undermines the status of ideologies seeking to organize Hinduism both horizontally and vertically, because it subverts the actual quality of the *varna* structure that underpins both approaches.[41]

A further area where Phule's work challenged the established pattern of middle class discourse on Hinduism was precisely that of organization and representation. Phule formed the Satyashodak Samaj, or 'Truth Seeking Society', in 1873. The Samaj worked to promote low caste consciousness and increase awareness of Brahman oppression. It also worked to increase low caste access to education and to oppose certain

customs and practices associated with low castes, such as liquor drinking and meat eating. Politically, the Satyashodak Samaj set itself up in opposition to the Sarvajanik Sabha, which Phule labelled the '*bhat* (Brahman) Sabha'.[42] The Samaj was nevertheless structured along the classic lines of nineteenth-century reform movements. It had a management committee and regular meetings, voting procedures, and a stipulated financial commitment for members. Indeed, of the 28 rules of the Samaj drawn up shortly after its inauguration, no less than 20 dealt with matters of internal organization. Phule's Samaj, then, cast a familiar profile in the public domain.

What is interesting is that it used this profile to make ambitious statements of its representative quality, which specifically contradicted those of high caste social and political organizations. Particularly from 1882 onwards, Phule turned his attention to the rural districts around Poona and members of the Samaj began to deliver lectures in villages and small district towns. The emphasis of Phule's writings also began to shift: away from the gulf between low castes and Brahmans, and towards that between the rural poor and the educated urban elite.[43] In effect, the Satyashodak Samaj now began to project itself as the representative of this massive constituency: the cultivators and labourers of rural Maharashtra. In so doing, it explicitly opposed the claims of the Sarvajanik Sabha to represent this constituency, and implicitly opposed the idea of an organized Hinduism—vertical or horizontal—as a means of unifying the country. As Phule states in the *Cultivators Whip-Cord,* written during 1882–3:

> It will be unity so long as it serves their purpose, and then it will be me here and you over there again. It's just like the old saying: We'll eat your seed-corn, and use mine for planting—this is how the Brahmans look after themselves. But if our learned Aryans really want to build unity amongst all the people, and improve the country, then they will have to get rid of this vile religion of winners and losers.[44]

Significantly, then, Phule tied his questioning of the representative claims of the Sarvajanik Sabha into the very idea of an organized, Brahmanic Hinduism. How could this organization be representative of the people, if it was simultaneously representative of this 'vile religion of winners and losers'? This was the very antithesis of what the ideologues of organized Hinduism were trying to promote.

The issue of representation emerged as one of the principal complaints of the non-Brahman movement from the late 1880s onwards. The 1889 Congress at Allahabad, for example, was challenged by a Poona-based

non-Brahman campaign which focused on the unrepresentative character of this so-called national body. The campaign culminated in a rally held concurrent with the Congress session. Three of the four resolutions approved by this meeting emphasized the unrepresentative nature of the Congress (the fourth called on the government to introduce compulsory education for all). As one of the resolutions stated, 'This National Congress is just composed of a handful of upper class and educated people. Therefore it should not represent its decisions as those of the whole nation.'[45]

Representation, then, emerges as a central bone of contention between the non-Brahman and Brahman-dominated organizations in western India. Representation, that is, of the people to the state. Both the Satyashodak Samaj and the Sarvajanik Sabha claimed to represent the views of the rural population of Maharashtra to the Bombay government. In so doing, both assumed a form consonant with the colonial discourse of organization—quasi-constitutional bodies largely unhampered by material structures of representation (as we have seen, even the Sabha's modest attempts to extend its representative quality drew a sharp retort from the governing classes, which perceived such structures as 'incompatible with the existing administration'). Phule and his contemporaries were therefore left to fight it out in this realm of symbolic representation, where the strength of representative claims could be sanctioned only by government recognition. Ironically, the significance of the Satyashodak Samaj in this context is that it was quite easily accommodated by a strong current of colonialist thought, which perceived Indian society as hopelessly fractured and Brahmanism as irretrievably corrupt. As such, it seriously challenged the validity of elite-based organizations even within this narrow domain of symbolic representation.

In addition, low caste mobilization within this framework implicitly challenged the legitimacy of ideological developments towards the organization of Hinduism. This challenge was enhanced by the suggestion, often encouraged by Phule's opponents in Poona, that members of the Satyashodak Samaj were no longer Hindus. O'Hanlon notes that members were reluctant to cut themselves off from Hinduism altogether, but nevertheless the rejection of many of the recognized trappings of caste Hinduism placed them on the fringes of the religion.[46] As this positioning was articulated very much in the public space, it helped to focus attention exactly on that issue of where the limits of Hinduism lay, in a similar manner to the census.

Two principal conclusions, then, can be drawn from this section. First, in the narrow domain of symbolic representation a dynamism is evident

in the claims and counter-claims of various organizations. This dynamism naturally focused attention on the structures of representation and the reality or otherwise of the projected constituency. This was a process which echoed developments in Indian nationalism. Second, the ideologies of organized Hinduism, both horizontal and vertical, were actively challenged by new forces in the public space, which persistently drew attention to the fuzzy edges of Hinduism, and to the apparent lack of harmony in its central structures. In this sense, the viability of a Brahman-dominated, internally coherent community of Hindus was brought into question even during this early period.

Practising the Organization of Hinduism

In the late 1880s and the 1890s two major movements did much to counter this challenge to middle class pretensions. These were the cow protection movement and the *shuddhi* movement. In both, middle class elements aimed to concretize the projected 'community of Hindus', by actively practising the organization of Hinduism. Their divergent approaches to this task reflect the distinction between horizontal and vertical organization identified earlier.

Cow Protection as Horizontal Organization

In recent years, a good deal of scholarly work has examined cow protection as a movement associated with the articulation of the Hindu community during the period 1880–1920.[47] My intention in this section is not to replicate this material by giving my own account of how the movement developed, but rather to work from it, by examining some specific issues related to the movement in the wider framework of the issue of organization.

As Gyanendra Pandey has pointed out, one of the principal subtexts of the literature on cow protection has been to establish it as an issue which bridged problematic gaps in the development of communalist consciousness—in particular, the gap between urban and rural Hindus and that between elite and mass consciousness.[48] This whole area is replete with problems, as Pandey has to some extent illustrated through his account of cow protection in the Bhojpuri region. Here, he says, cow protection did not represent the construction of new political alliances, new forms of consciousness; it was, rather, 'the strength of local caste and community organisation [that] mattered, and...the feeling of belonging to a wider "Hindu" or "Muslim" community did not mean...that "Hindus" and "Muslims" responded automatically and in unvarying

ways to every appeal for action on behalf of "Hindu" and "Muslim" interests.'[49] Local communal identities, then, were fragmentary—they did not necessarily refer themselves to a macro-communal identity. As well as local communal dynamics, it is also necessary to emphasize problems associated with the location of communalism—as an ideology—in relation to the issue of 'bridging the gaps'. There is a teleological focus on cow protection as a 'cause' of communal rioting across the northern plains, which overshadows the spread of the movement over a much wider area of colonial India, employing a less specifically confrontational ideology. This focus produces a common anomaly in the literature on cow protection: the perception of the movement as emanating from the aggressive proselytizing network of the Arya Samaj, whilst at the same time acknowledging its strength in areas where that organization was weak. This anomaly is epitomized by the frequent statement that the headquarters of the movement was located in Nagpur, a city with minimal Samaj activity and little Hindu–Muslim tension during this period,[50] without exploring the relationship between this centre and the rapidly unfolding violence of the northern plains.[51]

My argument in this section builds on the idea that cow protection during this period was not so much a movement as a series of movements, inspired by fragmentary ideological interests. This of course is very much the point that Pandey makes through his study of the Bhojpuri region. Where I would like to extend it is by arguing that one of these fragmentary interests was the horizontal organization of Hinduism; an elite-based ideology that attempted to encompass cow protection as a means of reifying its vision of Hinduism as one. The Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha constitutes an example of this kind of mobilization, particularly in its attempt to project itself as the headquarters of a nationwide movement. The Sabha is not easily described as communalist, as its approach was on the whole non-confrontational. It was nevertheless a significant step in the development of the ideology of Hindu nationalism.

I will identify three areas of change in the way in which cow protection was articulated towards the end of the nineteenth century, which indicate the trajectory of this intervention of the ideology of horizontal organization. The first concerns the location of cow protection as an issue in the public space. Katherine Prior has noted colonial involvement in cow protection disputes in the early nineteenth century as a means of establishing local custom.[52] This in itself, she suggests, led to the strengthening of the role of the cow as a symbol of Hinduness. In addition, it established the involvement of the state in a particular way, in that disputes were subjected to the 'neutral' arbitration of the rule of

law. The *legality* of people's actions in relation to cows—selling them, slaughtering them, eating them, conveying them (both dead and alive) in public places, and of course protecting them—came increasingly to be seen as the central issue in disputes. By the 1880s, cows *per se* were frequently relegated to a secondary level of importance in these legal battles. Early in 1881, for example, the newspapers of the northern plains engaged each other in a long debate over a recent incident during *Id* in Mirzapur. The major issue was not kine killing itself but rather the perception that the magistrate of Mirzapur acted in favour of Muslims in resolving the dispute. The *Kavi Vachan Sudha,* a Hindi weekly published in Benaras, argued that 'Mussalmans should not sacrifice kine in honour of the *Id* festival, as is obvious from a judgement recorded by the magistrate of Benaras on the 30th April 1840, which was confirmed by the *Sadr Nizamat* of Agra on 17 March 1841. Their religion asks them to sacrifice sheep, camels, and c.'[53]

In conjunction with this emphasis on law as a defining feature, the state's projection of religious neutrality was a prominent reference point in cow protection disputes. This is well illustrated by press comments on incidents in princely states which, of course, were subject to local legal frameworks. Again in 1881, for example, the Punjab press responded to an incident in Bahawalpur state, which led to riots and the destruction of Hindu temples. Many newspapers in Lahore were unable to envisage the Muslim Nawab meting out appropriate justice, and so called on the colonial government to 'interfere and protect them [the Hindus of Bahawalpur] from the oppression of the Mussalman', because 'a European would show no partiality to the Mussalmans or Hindus.'[54]

Here, then, we see the progressive entrenchment of cow protection as an issue in the public space. Although it had occupied this space to some extent throughout the nineteenth century, towards the end of the century it became increasingly bound up with law and the neutrality of the state projected by this law—issues which were articulated persistently in the indigenous press. As such, the participation of colonial elites in cow protection was ensured; if nothing else, they provided the interface between those involved in cow protection disputes and those that they hoped to influence: the state, and the 'public' as represented by the newspapers.

Second, the 1880s witnessed the growth of a new kind of cow protection, which indicates the active involvement of elite-based ideology. This was the introduction of programmes for the improvement of pastoral care and cattle usage in villages. As the *Mahratta* expressed it in 1889, the main problem in relation to cow protection was 'education of

the people as to proper husbandry techniques...(because) our animals, as they appear, are wretched looking skeletons fit for shooting'.[55] This kind of cow protection reflected the concerns of middle class organizations, in particular the concern to educate and increase awareness amongst rural populations. The Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha was particularly renowned for promoting this kind of work. The leading lights of the Nagpur Sabha, Gopal Hari Bhide and C. Narayanswami Naidu—both lawyers—toured the countryside giving lectures on the economic benefits of cow protection and eventually instructed a body of lecturers to extend this work.[56] This kind of semi-philanthropic cow protection aligns the Nagpur Sabha with other middle class organizations attempting to extend their influence in the *mofussil*. As such, John McLane's claim that the economic emphasis of the Sabha was responsible for its support base amongst the middle class ('Maratha Brahmin pleaders and other prominent persons'), which is roundly criticized by Pandey as classic elitist historiography, appears to carry some weight. This support, however, was engendered not on the basis of the 'bourgeois economic interests' of the elite, as Pandey somewhat mischievously suggests is McLane's point, but rather on the presentation of the movement in a recognizable middle class framework.[57] This is not to deny the validity of other motivating factors in the movement as a whole, nor the independent involvement of other classes with their own mobilizing strategies. Pandey's work in particular has made these points clear. My argument is that the emphasis of the Nagpur Sabha's activities reflects the concerns of middle class advocates of cow protection in the Central Provinces. The Nagpur Sabha, in terms of its trajectory and its strategy of mobilization, was a middle class organization.[58]

This point is supported by the nature of the organization's structure, which constitutes the third area of change in cow protection in the 1880s and 1890s. The Nagpur Sabha was an archetypal middle class body, recognizable in the public space. It had a quasi-representational character, and also ran its own press and newspaper. Apart from its rural education programme, one of its principal means of operating was to petition government. In May 1894, for example, it submitted a memorial calling for the regularization of government response to disputes over cow slaughter, in the light of recent unprecedented riots across the northern plains (whilst at the same time, it may be added, thanking the local government for its 'liberal policy of non-interference' with cow protection societies in the Central Provinces). This memorial begins with a familiar invocation:

By the grace of God, peoples of various races, faiths and creeds have been brought together under the rule of Her Majesty the Empress of India and they have been ever since enjoying an impartial treatment in matters of religion, under that celebrated Proclamation of 1858, known to them more as a charter of religious liberty than for anything else.[59]

Explicitly citing the 'rights' of Hindus under the Proclamation, then, the Sabha's memorial attempted to represent the concern of all cow protection societies at the government's failure to produce consistent rulings on cow protection disputes. This memorial was part of the strategy of the Nagpur Sabha to present itself as the 'headquarters' of the movement, a strategy formalized at the Sixth Anniversary Meeting of the Sabha in January 1894. Invitations to this meeting were sent to 'all the cow protection societies of this country', and in response 'over fifty delegates... attended the anniversary to represent their respective Sabhas....'[60] In fact the delegates were predominantly from the Maharashtra region, with Nagpur district providing 30 of the total of 55 delegates (16 of these represented Nagpur city itself).[61] Not unexpectedly, then, the delegates 'unanimously expressed a desire that the Nagpur Gorakshini Sabha should be made the central body of the cow protection movement, so as to give coherence, vitality and united strength to the disconnected efforts now being made all over India'. The government response was characteristically suspicious of such representative claims: 'I do not think it would be wise', one note comments, 'to recognise the right of these Mahrattas to speak for the North-Western Provinces, or interfere in any matters occurring there'.[62] It appears, however, that the government's anxiety was largely unfounded. In effect, this was an attempt by the Nagpur Sabha to stretch a symbolic representative role over a wide-ranging and extremely dynamic movement, which showed little inclination, at least outside the Central Provinces, to be led in this manner.[63]

In the north, cow protection was channelled through a variety of political and social structures. Caste was a major conduit, and various caste organizations did much to shape the quality of the movement, as Pandey has illustrated. The Arya Samaj also played a key role in sustaining the movement, following the publication of Dayananda's *Gokurananidhi,* or 'Ocean of Kindness to the Cow'; in 1881. This publication drew on the wide public debate over cow protection at this time, particularly in the wake of the incident at Mirzapur noted above, and may be perceived as part of the Swami's strategy to maintain strong links into the wider world of Hinduism.[64] Part of its effect was to galvanize local Samajes

into setting up Gaurakshini Sabhas in their localities. For the first time, the Samaj network was implemented as the framework of a wider movement. As we shall see, this was to become an increasingly important role for the Samaj in the development of organized Hinduism, a role which would draw it closer to horizontal organization, despite the vertical implications of Arya ideology. In the present context, it is significant to note that the Samaj collaborated with Sanatana Dharma Sabhas over cow protection,[65] despite evident ideological antagonism over other issues during this period. In addition, the Samaj never claimed leadership of the movement, despite its key role in the Punjab and western North West Provinces. Both these points may be seen as evidence of the significance of horizontal organization as a key factor in middle class participation in the movement. The Arya Samaj subsumed ideological objections to Sanatani interpretations of Hinduism, on the basis that the movement had the potential to galvanize a wide cross-section of people as Hindus. Similarly, it avoided alienating these people by assuming a low profile approach—cow protection, if it was to achieve this galvanizing objective, could not be perceived as a reformist project.

The Nagpur Sabha, on the other hand, had no such qualms about asserting a leadership role, as it had no reformist connotations. Its assertions may have had little practical impact in the north, but the headquarters self-image is nevertheless significant, because it again indicates the way in which horizontal organization, as an ideology, influenced middle class involvement in cow protection. The Nagpur Sabha lay at the heart of a vibrant movement within the Central Provinces, and it used this position to project a wider representative role. Apart from their instruction on pastoral care, the Sabha's lecturers were reported to have distributed literature which reflected this concern for horizontal organization. D.F. McCracken, in his confidential *Note on the Agitation against Cow Killing* of 1893, notes that lecturers

> expatiate on the glories of the Hindu regime in the past when no kine-slaughter was permitted, and appeal to Hindus to protect the cow, by distributing pamphlets, leaflets and pictures of the cow with representations of the various gods in every part of its body. Some cartoons represent the cow about to be slaughtered by a butcher and all the different castes of Hindus standing around and crying out to him to desist.[66]

The last point illustrates the way in which the cow was projected as a collective responsibility of Hindus.

Middle class involvement in the cow protection movement, then, may be said to represent a fairly inchoate attempt to put into practice the

horizontal organization of Hinduism. The increasing entrenchment of cow protection in the public space presented the middle class with an unprecedented opportunity to assume control of a movement that had developed amongst trading, banking and landowning castes, and involved other sections of the population through a myriad of caste-based structures of mobilization and enforcement.[67] The ideological developments which had produced the notion of the Maha Hindu Samiti and the 'organic' unity of Hinduism could now be articulated under the aegis of a genuinely universal symbol, which seemed to encompass common ideas of what it meant to be a Hindu. As is clear from scholarly research on the cow protection movement, however, this middle class ideology was never able to assume a leadership role. I would suggest that one of the principal reasons for this failure was the limited development of middle class notions of organization during this period. The Nagpur Sabha asserted its leadership on the basis of symbolic representation, a strategy which was unable to accommodate independently developed caste and local community based structures. Clearly, if the organic unity of Hinduism was to become a reality, it either had to be articulated differently, or a more efficient means of representing this unity needed to be developed.

'Shuddhi' as Vertical Organization

The *shuddhi* movement, developing over much the same period as the cow protection movement, did attempt to articulate the unity of Hinduism in a different manner; a manner based on the vertical restructuring of Hindu society. This was a unity which implied the transformation of the religion, as envisioned by Dayananda in *Satyarth Prakash*.

Shuddh means 'pure' or 'free from error', and is associated in Hinduism with the natural state of an individual in the performance of *dharma*. In the nineteenth century, however, the term began to assume a more specific ritual meaning. This meaning arose initially out of a singularly colonial situation, in that it referred to the ritual processes required of high caste Hindus who had travelled abroad, and in so doing had naturally come into contact with polluting materials or persons. The flow of high caste, high class individuals to Britain to receive education demanded the formulation of ceremonial codes which allowed for full caste rehabilitation on their return.[68] Purification assumed the form of a standard ritual process signifying the re-entry of the individual into a situation where he could perform his *dharma* and resume normal social relations. Caste here is articulated as the defining framework of religiosity

(as well as of normal social interaction). A polluted individual regains access to religious truths by readmission to his caste. Interestingly, then, *shuddhi* as ceremonial code reiterates the notion noted earlier that caste functions as a church-like institution in Hinduism.

The establishment of a ceremonial process of this kind created theoretical space for the purification of individuals who for some reason had been outcast. Jordens notes such an occasion in 1850 in Bombay, where a Brahman boy was outcast due to extended stay in a non-Hindu (Christian) house.[69] The boy's father secured doctrinal authority for the re-establishment of caste status after purification rites had been performed, in the form of agreement from certain *pandits*, and from the *Shankaracharya* of Karvir *Math*. In practice, however, this re-admission failed due to the continued social boycott of the family in Bombay. Far more radical were developments in Calcutta during the early 1850s. Here, the Dharma Sabha was encouraging debate over means of reaccepting high caste Christian converts, many of them the wayward sons of powerful *bhadralok* families. The Sabha sponsored meetings along these lines, including a large public meeting attended by 200 *pandits* and several hundred others in May 1851. The following year a 'Society for the Deliverance of Hindu Apostates' was formed, which set up a public re-acceptance ceremony. Four hundred people were assembled on 5 May 1852 'to form a native House of Commons, discussing, deliberating and determining upon the question at issue with the greatest eagerness, zeal and unanimity'. Of the six applicants for re-acceptance, 'four were restored to the privileges of the caste and two were driven out with contempt and disdain'.[70]

This kind of occasion remained as a fairly isolated occurrence, however, until the late 1870s, when the Arya Samaj began to project *shuddhi* as a process of conversion. As in Bengal, the aggressive nature of Christian missionary activity in Punjab formed the context for this development. Dayananda was acutely aware of the need to defend Hinduism against missionary incursions. His main defence strategy was doctrinal refutation, comparing and contrasting the anomalies of Christian doctrine with the scientific truths of the Vedas. *Shuddhi* emerged as a further defence strategy and Dayananda effected two such ceremonies in the north. The first was performed in Jullundar in 1877. The subject was a Christian convert. The second was performed in Dehra Dun two years later, where the subject was a born Muslim.[71]

Dayananda's implementation of *shuddhi* as a strategy of conversion was immediately controversial because it focused attention yet again on the vexed question of boundaries and essential characteristics of Hindu-

ism. What, after all, defined a believer in Hinduism, other than caste status? How could a convert be perceived as a Hindu, if he or she had no caste? In terms of Dayananda's creed, of course, this problem could be surmounted. The value of his limited scriptural tradition as the core of Hinduism was precisely that boundaries and characteristics were easily identified. *Shuddhi* fits easily into the logic of merit-based *varna-vyavastha,* in that converted individuals would be assigned to their appropriate *varna* on the basis of their knowledge and practice of 'pure' Hinduism. This was of course only a theoretical position in the late 1870s, which may have been cold comfort to Dayananda's converts. What the Arya Samaj could provide, however, was the Samaj Mandir, an institutional focus which was not defined by caste. It constituted the material representation of their new religious community, as well as a place to worship and study.

Again, this is not to say that the Samaj Mandir provided a casteless haven for converts. It has already been noted that the Arya Samaj remained integrated with the wider world of Hinduism in the most crucial sense, in that Aryas maintained their caste status. Because of this, *shuddhi* developed as an Arya institution that continually questioned the organization's practices and its relationship with that wider world. This is indicated by the first attempt at a standardization of the *shuddhi* ceremony, developed by the Amritsar Samaj in the early 1880s.[72] The Amritsar *shuddhi* was devised in association with a local *pandit,* Tulsi Ram, and included a trip to Hardwar, where 'after bath, they would get themselves purified by taking water made holy with cow dung by paying Rs. 5-4-0'.[73] This kind of practice was entirely against the teaching of Dayananda, and appears extraordinary in the context of numerous attacks on Brahman ritual and 'superstition' in Arya journals at this time.[74] The apparent contradiction is indicative of the awkward position of the Samaj. *Shuddhi* was, after all, not an issue of doctrinal debate but rather one of purity and impurity. It operated on the limits of acceptability with regard to the caste structure. The involvement of locally recognized orthodoxy—as represented by Tulsi Ram—and practices associated with that orthodoxy at least gave some insurance that Samajists would not themselves be outcast as a result of their involvement with *shuddhi.*

The nature of *shuddhis* carried out by the Amritsar Samaj and other Samajs during the 1880s and early 1890s was also relatively uncontroversial; they were generally straightforward purifications or reconversions of individuals, who could be rehabilitated quite smoothly into their former castes.[75] There was, nevertheless, a good deal of resistance even within the Arya Samaj to full integration with converts at this time.[76]

Despite this resistance, an increasingly independent streak began to emerge in *shuddhi* practice. This shift in attitude is indicated as early as 1888 by comment in the Arya press that ritual aspects were 'degrading', and that 'a true Arya would never bow down to such unmeaning ceremonies and their selfish advocates, the Brahmans'.[77] In 1890 the Montgomery Samaj refused to send a Muslim convert to Hardwar,[78] and in 1893 the Amritsar Samaj again led the way by changing its ceremony to conform to a 'purely Vedic formula', consisting of shaving of the head, *havan,* explanation of the *Gayatri,* investiture with holy thread, explanation of Samaj duties, and distribution of *sherbet* to all present at the ceremony.[79] This new streamlined ceremony, eliminating all priestly involvement, was to prove the vehicle for a fundamental change in the nature of *shuddhi.*

Before going on to examine this change, however, it is necessary to briefly look at a further development in the early 1890s which was critically linked to the *shuddhi* movement. This was the debate initiated by militant Aryas around the formation of an Arya *biradri,* or caste, which led to the formation of a new organization within the Samaj, the Arya Bhratri Sabha. The Sabha attempted to promote the notion of the Arya Samaj as a separate social order, which would implement Dayananda's notion of merit-based *varna-vyavastha.*[80] This new order was perceived as a means of overcoming the problem of how to integrate Arya converts. Counter-argument revolved around the fact that this would certainly lead to excommunication and isolation, a consequence which most caste Aryas could not contemplate. The debate engendered by the Arya Bhratri Sabha indicates the significance of *shuddhi* to the reforming trajectory of the Arya Samaj, in that it consistently emphasized this contradictory relationship between the Samaj and caste as the central organizing principle of contemporary Hinduism.

As the Sabha-inspired debate over caste and the Samaj continued, a two-fold shift in the nature of *shuddhi* ceremonies began to emerge.[81] First, from 1896 onwards the practice of individual ceremonies was superseded by multiple or mass purifications. Second, increasingly the subjects of *shuddhi* ceremonies were low caste Hindus or untouchables, as opposed to Christians or Muslims.[82] The focus moves away from the notion of reclaiming those lost to other religions and towards the notion of improving the predicament of groups nominally associated with Hinduism, by investing them with full (twice-born) caste status. The first significant *shuddhi* of this kind occurred in 1900, when the Lahore Samaj performed *shuddhi* for a group of Rahtia Sikhs, an untouchable caste similar to the Hindu Chamar caste.[83] This action was rapidly

followed by further *shuddhis* amongst Rahtias, as well as Ods and Meghs. By 1903, large numbers of low castes and untouchables were being purified at mass ceremonies in the districts of Punjab, Kashmir, and UP.[84]

The shift in emphasis towards the mass purification of low caste communities provided the Arya Samaj with a viable strategy for reform, along the lines indicated by Dayananda's transformative trajectory. The Samaj could now point to the practical application of the Swami's vision of a reorganized Hinduism. Not only did this kind of *shuddhi* work towards the eradication of caste oppression associated with the corruption of contemporary Brahmanism; it also implicitly acknowledged the framework of merit-based *varna,* as the purification ceremony implied the purification of low caste practice as a feature of their new twice-born status. In short, it was a vehicle for the vertical restructuring of Hinduism, which would—at least theoretically—clearly define its boundaries. In addition, *shuddhi* could now be projected not only as a strategy of conversion but also as a kind of pre-emptive strike against the threat of Christian missionary conversions of low caste groups.

The implicit contradiction between vertical and horizontal conceptions of the organization of Hinduism was now made manifest. For Sanatanis, the shift in emphasis meant a direct assault on the structure they sought to defend as a fundamental component of Hindu tradition. *Shuddhi* had come to be perceived as a means of reclaiming or converting individuals from the 'foreign' religions of Christianity and Islam—the involvement of establishment *pandits* and ritualized ceremonies reflected and reinforced this perception. The new trend in Arya practice, however, shattered the image. How could low caste groups be converted or reclaimed, if they were already a feature of Hindu society? The question again focuses directly on the boundaries of Hinduism as the critical area of dispute for these developing ideologies. The implications of the reformist challenge to the maintenance of the established structure of Hinduism were such that there was immediate and strong resistance.[85] The concretization of this conceptual opposition set the parameters for middle class debates in the early twentieth century on the development of Hinduism as both a political force and a socio-religious entity.

Both the cow protection and the *shuddhi* movements, then, witnessed elite attempts to unify Hinduism, but they were based on very different perceptions of this process of unification. During the 1880s and early 1890s the massive upsurge in cow protection activity was accompanied and sometimes motivated by attempts to appropriate the cow as a symbol of the horizontal organization of Hinduism—the religion being projected

as bound together by a common, overriding concern for bovine welfare. In contrast, as the *shuddhi* movement focused more on low castes and untouchables, it came to represent an attempt to vertically reorganize Hinduism, to re-draw, as it were, the lines of definition of what it meant to be a Hindu. With a foot in both camps, the Arya Samaj was gradually to realize its ambivalent position in the construction of a modern Hindu identity—on the one hand pressing for the transformation of established structures, the eradication of caste-based oppression; and on the other committed to the unification of Hinduism and the maintenance of its own position at the forefront of elite-led Hindu consciousness. The development of political Hinduism only accentuated this ambivalence.

Notes

1. For an account of how these ideas became entrenched as features of Congress history, see B. Chandra et al., *India's Struggle for Independence* (Penguin, Delhi, 1989), pp. 61–70.
2. See, for example, J. Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994), pp. 167–83; S. Bose and A. Jalal, *Modern South Asia: History, Culture, Political Economy* (Routledge, London, 1998), pp. 107, 115–6.
3. See R. O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), p. 190.
4. *The Englishman*, 18 May 1875, quoted in ibid., p. 191
5. Most famously by transferring M.G. Ranade, the leading light of the Sabha, from his post as a judge in Poona; see ibid.
6. S. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1963), p. 37.
7. Ibid., p. 39.
8. Ibid., p. 44.
9. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885–1947* (Macmillan India, Delhi, 1983), p. 89.
10. Chandra et al., *India's Struggle for Independence*, p. 78.
11. The key text here is still Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India.*
12. Speech at Calcutta 28 April 1877; S. Banerjea, *Speeches*, vol.1, p. 67.
13. *Bengalee*, 10 December 1898.
14. In the sense articulated earlier in terms of the organization of the state and the disorganization of society. G.K. Gokhale later rationalized this

apparent contradiction in colonial government as the distinction between 'narrow' and 'noble' imperialism; see, for example, his speech at Madras, 25 July 1904, in Ambedkar and Karve (eds), *Speeches and Writings of G.K. Gokhale,* vol. 2 (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966), p. 177.

15. This view is supported by reference to Haynes' typology of elite adaptation to the colonial context. Haynes describes one such form of adaptation as 'hegemonic adaptation', where the elite 'enters into the discourse of the colonisers regularly, it holds the colonisers to principles they espouse, and it frames its own identity at least partially in reference to alien ideological models'. *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India,* p. 26.
16. See, for example, D.V. Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak: Father of Indian Unrest and Maker of Modern India* (Murray, London, 1956); S.L. Karandikar, *Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak: The Hercules and Prometheus of Modern India* (Poona, 1957).
17. See R.I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya: Tilak and Mass Politics in Maharashtra* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1975) pp. 66, 97; S. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1962), pp. 68–70.
18. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (Macmillan, London, 1910), p. 40.
19. See especially Freitag, *Collective Action and Community,* pp. 7–13.
20. For a detailed account, see Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya,* pp. 76–7.
21. On Freitag's public arena, see *Collective Action and Community,* Introduction to Part III, pp. 177–97.
22. *Kesari,* 8 September 1896; quoted in Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya,* p. 79.
23. As Rosalind O'Hanlon has shown, towards the end of the nineteenth century Shivaji became a pliable historical tool in the presentation of a variety of ideological stances. See O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology,* Chapter 10, pp. 164–86.
24. *Mahratta,* 31 December 1895; quoted in Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya,* p. 107.
25. Quoted in V.P. Varma, *Life and Philosophy of Lokamanya Tilak* (Agra, 1978), p. 210.
26. *Census of India 1881,* vol. I, India, p. 17.
27. Ibid., p. 18.
28. Ibid., p. 19.
29. See *Census of India 1901,* vol. XIII, Central Provinces Pt. 1: Report (Secretariat Press, Nagpur, 1902), p. 78.
30. Ibid., pp. 90, 99.
31. Ibid., p. 90.
32. Ibid., p. 92.

33. Ibid., p. 95.
34. *Census of India 1881,* vol. I, India, p. 17
35. For further examples of this, see G. Pandey , 'Which of Us are Hindus?', in G. Pandey (ed.), *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today* (Viking Penguin India, New Delhi, 1993), pp. 238–73: p. 246. Pandey in fact notes that in Tamil Nadu 'the term Hindu is used to this day to differentiate upper caste Hindus (the "Hindus") from untouchables or Harijans....'
36. I will use the term 'low caste' in the context of movements, consciousness, etc. in a generic sense, to signify the resistance of low castes, untouchables, and *adivasis* (tribals) to high caste oppression.
37. On the Maratha-*kunbi* (cultivator) identity, see O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology,* Chapter 2, pp. 15–49; see especially p. 45: 'The tendency for ordinary kunbis to call themselves Marathas was most noticeable in the Pune area—the birthplace of non-Brahman ideology.'
38. *Mahratta,* 24 November 1895; in Report on the Native Press, Bombay, No. 48 of 1895.
39. O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology,* p. 105.
40. Ibid., p. 149.
41. There is some evidence that Phule cooperated to a certain extent with the Arya Samaj. In 1875 he took part with a group of his friends in a rally in Poona in honour of Dayananda. Their involvement appears to have been limited to the role of a 'protection force' in the face of strong opposition to Dayananda from the Poona religious establishment. Ideological support for the Swami was muted even on this occasion. See D. Keer, *Mahatma Jotirao Phooley: Father of the Indian Social Revolution* (Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1964), p. 139; O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology,* p. 223.
42. Keer, *Mahatma Jotirao Phooley,* p. 109.
43. O'Hanlon, *Caste, Conflict and Ideology,* p. 258.
44. Quoted in ibid., p. 267.
45. Resolution 3, quoted in ibid., p. 285; the other resolutions read:

    1. If 99 out of every 100 people in the population have never even heard of the National Congress, it cannot be called a National Congress, meaning chosen by the nation and respected by the nation. 2. The nation has not elected this National Congress, and does not regard it as such; therefore its decisions cannot be said to be approved by the country at large. 3. The Government should begin to introduce compulsory education for all.

46. Ibid., p. 239.
47. See Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism,* p. 162, n. 9 for a good listing of this work. Apart from Pandey's book, I have found the following particularly useful in constructing a picture of the cow protection movement during the 1890s: McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early*

Congress (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1977); A. Yang, 'Sacred Symbol and Sacred Space in Rural India: Community Mobilisation in the "Anti-Cow Killing" Riot of 1893', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* vol. 22, no. 4, 1980, pp. 576–96; S. Freitag, 'Sacred Symbol as Mobilising Agency: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* vol. 22, no. 4, 1980, pp. 597–625; and P. Robb, 'The Challenge of Gau Mata: British Policy and Religious Change in India, 1880–1916', in *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 20, no. 2, 1986, pp. 285–319.

48. Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism,* p. 163.
49. Ibid., pp. 198–9.
50. By 1901 there were no more than 406 Arya Samajis in the whole of Central Provinces, a rise from 275 in 1891. Most Samajis were based in the Hindi-speaking Jubbulpore district in the north. See *Census of India 1901,* vol. XIII, Central Provinces Pt 1, p.99. The lack of Hindu–Muslim tension in the region at this time may be gauged by the Secretary of the Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha's comment to the local government that 'it is...no small satisfaction to [the Sabha] that the Central Provinces have enjoyed an entire freedom from those religious outbreaks, which disturbed the peace of other parts of India'. Letter from Gopal Hurry Bhide, Sabha Secretary, to Revenue Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces; see Central Provinces Secretariat, General Home Department, B. Progs, June 1894, nos 49–53 (Nagpur).
51. See, for example, Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism,* p. 164: 'Stimulated by the writing and activities of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the movement found organizational form in the Gaurakshini Sabhas (Cow Protection Societies) of the early 1880s, first established in Punjab and then spreading to other parts of northern and central India. Nagpur in the Central Provinces was described as being the headquarters of the Gaurakshini movement at the end of the decade.'
52. K. Prior, 'Making History: The State's Intervention in Urban Religious Disputes in the North Western Provinces in the Early Nineteenth Century', in *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 27, 1993, pp. 179–204: pp. 191–203.
53. *Kavi Vachan Sudha,* 28 February 1881. Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers, Punjab, North West Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces and Berar, 1881, no. 125.
54. *Mittr Vilas,* 28 March 1881, *Anjuman-i-Punjab,* 28 March 1881, in ibid.
55. *Mahratta,* 7 July 1889.
56. See D.F. McCracken's 'Note on the Agitation against Cow Killing', Home Dept Public, December 1893, No. 210, p. 10 (NAI). The establishment of institutions to train preachers on cow protection was also one of the aims of the projected all-India movement of which the Nagpur Sabha

was to be the central body; see 'Proceedings of the Sixth Anniversary of the Gorakshini Sabha, Nagpur'; Central Provinces Secretariat, General Home Department, B Progs, June 1894, nos 49–53 (Nagpur). See also McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress,* p. 286.

57. Pandey makes this suggestion quoting McLane's point that 'it was the economic emphasis of the Sabha's activites which accounted for the widespread support given to the (Cow protection) movement...' as evidence of a historiographical reduction of the causes of 'sectarian outbreaks' to the level of elite economic interests; it is only several paragraphs later that he quotes the whole of McLane's sentence—'It was the economic emphasis of the Sabha's activites which accounted for the widespread support given to the (Cow protection) movement in the Central Provinces by Maratha Brahmin pleaders and other prominent persons'—by which time the link between McLane and this spurious bourgeois economism is already established. See Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism,* p. 18–19; McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress,* p. 287.
58. Again, this did not preclude the involvement of other classes in the Sabha; this was, after all, precisely the objective of the strategy of mobilization in the districts. David Baker records that within a year of the establishment of the Sabha in 1888, 'there were forty-nine similar bodies in the province, some in the district and *tahsil* (revenue subdivision) towns of the region, where *malguzars* (proprietary heads of rural estates) and moneylenders were amongst the most enthusiastic members'. David Baker, *Colonialism in an Indian Hinterland 1820–1920* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993), p. 323.
59. 'Memorial from the Chairman of a Public Meeting of the inhabitants of Nagpur and the adjoining Districts, praying that definite rules be framed for the guidance of District Officers in the matter of kine slaughter'; Home Department Public, July 1894, Part A, nos 301–4 (NAI).
60. See 'Proceedings of the Sixth Anniversary of the Gorakshini Sabha, Nagpur'; Central Provinces Secretariat, General Home Department, B Progs, June 1894, nos 49–53 (Nagpur).
61. Delegates were from (where there was more than one, the number of delegates is given in brackets): Bombay (7), Farukabad, Darbhanga, Sitamadhi, Jalgam (2), Dharwar, Bhandara, Kolhapur, Poona, Raipur, Bela (2), Harda, Bori (2), Saoner, Dhamangam, Katol (2), Khapa, Kelod (2), Wardha, Umrer, Chatrapur (2), Dhapewara (2), Patasaongi (2), Arvi, Satara, Nagpur (16). See ibid.
62. Home Department Public, July 1894, Part A, nos 301–4; 'Keep with' papers, note initialled A.P.M., dated 10 July 1894 (NAI).
63. Apart from the point gleaned from Pandey's work that this movement was fragmentary, driven by a series of disparate motivations, one should also note the counter-claims of the Allahabad Sabha to lead the movement:

see *Mahratta,* 30 June 1889, *Native Opinion,* 16 September 1888 for reports of speeches by Sriman Swami which allude to the 'Central Committee' at Allahabad.

64. On *Gokurananidhi,* see Jordens, *Dayananda Saraswati,* p. 220–2.
65. See McCracken's 'Note on the Agitation against Cow Killing', p. 10.
66. Ibid.
67. For government reports on these structures, see ibid., pp. 10–11, and 'Note on the Cow Protection Agitation in the Gorakhpur District', Home Department Public, A Progs, December 1893, nos 212–3 (NAI).
68. See J.T.F. Jordens, 'Reconversion to Hinduism: The Shuddhi of the Arya Samaj', in G.A. Oddie (ed.), *Religion in South Asia: Religious Conversion and Revival Movements in South Asia in Medieval and Modern Times,* (Curzon Press, London, 1977), pp. 145–62: p.145; Y. Sikand and M. Katju, 'Mass Conversions to Hinduism among Indian Muslims', *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 29, no. 34, 20 August 1994, pp. 2214–19: p. 2215.
69. Jordens, 'Reconversion to Hinduism', p. 146.
70. *Bengal Hurkuru,* quoted in M.M. Ali, *The Bengali Reaction to Christian Missionary Activities 1833–1857* (Mehrub Publications, Chittagong, 1965), pp. 97–100.
71. Jordens, 'Reconversion to Hinduism', pp. 146–7.
72. R.K. Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement in India* (Commonwealth Publications, New Delhi, 1990), pp. 46–7, quoting from the *Arya Patrika,* 22 August 1885: 'The Amritsar Arya Samaj has taken the lead in this matter, and Hindu society must be grateful to that Samaj. Very much is due in this direction to Pundit Tulsi Ram of Amritsar, who takes deep interest in Hindu society and deeply aware of the necessity of this reform, carries it into practice.'
73. Noted by Swami Shraddhanand in his *Diary;* and quoted in ibid., p. 47.
74. See Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 110 for examples of this.
75. For examples of *shuddhi* during this period, see Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 131, and Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement,* pp. 45–6.
76. See J.R. Graham, 'The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism with Special Reference to Caste', p. 463, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1942.
77. *Arya Patrika,* 21 August 1888, quoted in Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement,* p. 48.
78. *Tribune,* 28 May 1890, quoted in Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 134.
79. Graham, 'The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism', pp. 463–5.
80. See ibid., pp. 478–9.
81. Graham posits a causitive relationship between the debate and the shift; ibid., p. 490.

82. See Jordens, 'Reconversion to Hinduism', p. 150; Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement,* p. 56: a family of over 200 outcast Sikhs was purified in a village in Gurdaspur Distirct; this *shuddhi* was undertaken by the Lahore Shuddhi Sabha, a joint Arya–Sikh operation.
83. See Jordens, 'Reconversion to Hinduism', p. 151; Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement,* p. 69.
84. For fascinating insights into *shuddhi* during this period, see the extensive quotation of eyewitness accounts by two women, Serala Devi and Muriel Lester, in Graham, 'The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism', pp. 500–4 (n.b. Devi's account is taken from an article entitled 'Social Service in the Punjab', *Indian Review,* 18 May 1918).
85. See Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement,* p. 69.

4

Imagining the Constituency of Hindus in the Early Twentieth Century

After the turn of the century, the idea of organized Hinduism began to assume an increasingly significant role in projections and counter-projections of the Indian people, which were central to contemporary political discourse. In this chapter I will examine how this discourse developed, and how organized Hinduism sought to establish a position within the framework it provided. In addition, I will examine further pressures on the conceptualization of Hinduism, which again accentuated the urgency of those advocating the organization of Hinduism—both vertically and horizontally—to develop their ideas in practice.

The organizational focus for this chapter will be the Hindu Sabha movement. The Sabha emerged in this highly pressurized context as the first concerted attempt to subsume the differences of those with divergent approaches to the process of the conceptual unification of Hinduism. My argument will be that the pressure to organize politically was such that organization itself began to emerge as a paramount objective. The tacit subsumption of ideological differences which this caused implicitly favoured horizontal organization, with its belief in the maintenance of the status quo. Henceforth, the organization of Hinduism began to be seen less as a process subject to ideological debate over the way the religion related to modernity, and more as a kind of self-referential symbol of Hindu salvation. Underpinning this transition, it will be argued, was the imagining of a constituency of Hindus in colonial politics. Consciously, I am referring to an imagined constituency as opposed to community, because it is necessary to emphasize the specifically political nature of the process. Hindus were imagined as a social bloc in order to

fulfil a particular role in developing political discourse. Understanding how this process of imagining occurred is a major objective of this chapter.

The Dynamism of Indian Nationalism

A key point in the development of a politically viable constituency of Hindus was the close relationship between Hindu politics and the politics of elite-led Indian nationalism. As indicated in the previous chapter, this form of nationalism entered a particularly dynamic period during the 1890s, as certain elements began to question the boundaries of middle class political discourse. One consequence of this was that the established ('moderate') discourse of Indian nationalism in the Congress organization was progressively challenged by what became known as 'extremism'. This trend was particularly marked in the first decade of the twentieth century and the emergence of the Hindu Sabha movement towards the end of this decade must be viewed in the context of this discursive challenge. The representation of the constituency of Hindus, an idea which underpinned the Sabha movement from the outset, was directly related to struggles within Congress over how precisely the Indian nation (i.e. the national 'constituency') was to be represented. It is this notion of representation, indeed, which dominated the politics of the period, and, in a sense, provided the space for the articulation of the community of Hindus.

Developing Nationalist Strategies of Confrontation

A significant indicator of how far the parameters of political discourse were being challenged in the late 1890s is provided by a further look at some of Tilak's work during this period in Maharashtra. In July 1895 Tilak engineered a take-over of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. This take-over not only articulated the lines of moderate/extremist opposition in the region,[1] but also provided Tilak with an established structure, a recognized political body through which to work. As we have seen, his previous work had been conducted either within existing moderate-dominated bodies, especially Congress, through his newspapers, or through the limited potential of the 'festival' structure, as in both the Ganapati and Shivaji movements. The Sabha provided him with an organizational base upon which to launch further campaigns and the advent of famine during the winter of 1896 created the space to utilize this structure.

The famine of 1896–7 was severe throughout India, and particularly so in certain districts of Bombay Presidency. Famine Relief Codes which had been drawn up initially in 1883 were brought into operation in the context of this unremitting and widespread famine. The thrust of Tilak's campaign was simply to ensure that the provisions of the Code in Bombay Presidency were upheld, during a period when district officials were also under pressure to maintain a flow of revenue for the Presidency. The situation was perceived as an illustration of a key colonial contradiction between the interests of the state and those of the people. On the one hand, the interests of the people were represented by the provisions for famine relief; on the other, the interests of the state were represented by the need to maintain revenue collection. Tilak's campaign effectively worked to expose this perceived contradiction.

A significant feature of the Sabha's activity during the famine campaign was its penetration of rural districts, whilst maintaining a coordinating focus at Poona. This focus was maintained not only through the central offices of the Sabha but also through the columns of the *Kesari* and *Mahratta,* which regularly reported the movement of Sabha workers in the districts throughout the campaign. The role of the newspapers is important because it cast this rural campaign firmly as an issue within the public space. In a manner reminiscent of middle class involvement in the cow protection movement, the basic thrust of the Sabha's famine campaign was educative. In December 1896, the *Kesari* stated that 'the *rayat* [peasant cultivator] requires to be taught what his basic rights are and how he should seek to enforce them.'[2] Where the campaign differed from cow protection, however, was in the explicitly political trajectory of this educative role: in the context of the famine, teaching the *rayat* his basic rights meant exposing the contradiction between his interests and those of the state.

One of the most interesting features of the campaign was the drive to create genuine rural political organizations, and to politicize pre-existing local bodies. In December 1896 Tilak wrote:

> The *Kesari* advises the leaders of the people in various *talukas* to form themselves into committees to watch the progress of the famine operations in their respective centres and to ventilate the grievances of the *rayats* and the workmen employed on the relief works in such a way as to ensure speedy redress.[3]

To encourage this feature, the Sabha produced and distributed through its agents a number of pamphlets, including 6000 copies of the Famine Code translated into Marathi, as well as standardized petitions for the remission of land revenue.[4] This attempt to initiate organic political

organizations among the peasantry reflects a particular perception of the role of this social bloc in the political representation of the nation, particularly in opposition to the colonial state. The peasantry constituted the core of the nation, as it were. If nationalists were to be seen as truly representative of the people, they had to raise consciousness in this key area. The perception was not new in itself; what was new was the attempt to encourage the political expression of this role through peasant-led organizations. To disrupt, in effect, the established discourse of political organization. Thus Tilak: 'The country's emancipation can only be achieved by removing the clouds of lethargy and indifference which have been hanging over the peasant.... We must remove these clouds, and for that we must completely identify ourselves with the peasant.'[5]

The point about 'removing clouds' demonstrates the trajectory of developing nationalist strategy under the influence of Tilak and other emerging extremists at this time. Their assumption was that the land-owning peasantry was unable to see beyond the powerful fact of British rule—in effect, that the peasantry was subject to the same colonial hegemony which rendered the moderate Congress a 'mendicant' assembly. Their approach was therefore to attempt to replace this projected hegemony with a nationalist hegemony based on the idea that a middle class leadership could effectively represent the interests of the people and ultimately release the nation from colonial oppression. In this sense, the limited nature of colonial hegemony identified in Chapter 1 may be said to have given rise to a limited counter-hegemony, in which the emerging nationalist elite waged ideological struggle with the state in a curiously dislocated war of position.

Almost regardless of its actual impact, therefore, the work of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha during this period pushed against the boundaries of colonial public space. Its exposure of the government's failure to deal effectively with the famine situation was obviously counterproductive to the interests of the state, and its attempts at mobilization of *rayats* challenged existing models of political organization. This is clearly reflected in the uneasy official response to the Sabha's activities. In the early months of 1897 several individual agents of the Sabha were prosecuted at a local level. In March, the Bombay government took one fascinating step further: it withdrew the Sabha's status as a recognized public body. This was an attempt to marginalize the Sabha by asserting that it no longer had a position within the public space—in the eyes of the state, it had stepped beyond the limits of what was acceptable, even meaningful, within this space.

As we have seen, however, the public space was also full of independent indigenous discourse. The *Mahratta* described those government officers who had effected prosecutions of Sabha agents as 'the worst enemies of the people'.[6] On the withdrawal of public status, the *Kesari* comments:

> The Sabha's activity has been an eyesore to the Government for some months past. They could not reply to its well-reasoned representation regarding the administration of famine relief. They could not legally convict any of its agents in a court of law. So they have by departmental procedure deprived the Sabha of all right to recognition as a public body.[7]

'Departmental procedure' is contrasted to the rule of law; the *Kesari* represents the government as moving outside the area of its own hegemonic project, in order to suppress the 'well-reasoned' activity of the Sabha. Some days later, the *Kesari* concluded from this action that the 'interests of our present rulers and the people are generally found not to harmonize.'[8] The government, then, was forced into a confrontation through which Tilak was able to dramatically demonstrate the idea of a contradiction between the interests of the state and those of the people.

This strategy of confrontation—and the divergence of views within the movement which it represented—was carried forward into the major nationalist campaign against the partition of Bengal in 1905. The extremist strategy of boycott and *swadeshi* as employed during the anti-partition campaign was based primarily upon economic resistance to colonialism. The central focus of the movement was the boycott of Lancashire cloth (and other British goods) and the parallel encouragement of indigenous industries. The boycott was extended from this base into a more sophisticated network of boycotts (a 'doctrine of passive resistance' as it was called by the Bengali extremist Aurobindo Ghose), encompassing education, justice, and administration.

The central economic focus was employed despite the fact that partition was not primarily an economic issue. Boycott was rather a strategic response. As Tilak commented in 1905, 'People will not persevere in the swadeshi movement, unless they burn with indignation at Manchester...robbing the country of so much wealth.'[9] As this indicates, the emphasis of the movement was on expanding political comprehension of colonial economic relations. This theme of comprehension underpinned the whole strategy. Tilak again states, in relation to the administrative boycott, that 'it may not be feasible to boycott Government service altogether, but that is no reason why we should not try to impress upon the minds of the people that Government service exercises a debasing influence upon character'.[10] The literal success of

the boycott was not the issue here. Its principal objective was rather to increase popular consciousness of—to 'impress upon the minds of the people'—the damaging implications of British rule.

Again, then, the objective of this strategy was ideological. It sought to transform the 'mental frameworks' which middle class nationalists like Tilak and Aurobindo saw as holding key social classes in thrall to the enduring image of the colonial imperative. Boycott and *swadeshi* may be defined as a strategy of counter-hegemony, configured precisely to undermine the idea that the state worked primarily in the interests of the Indian people. Consequently, the organizational structures that they sought to employ were directed not towards government, seeking redress, but towards the people, seeking tangible expansion of the constituency of Indian nationalists.

This was undoubtedly a significant shift of focus, but in practice the only potential organization through which to implement such expansion was the Congress. This organization was controlled by the moderates, who continued to articulate politics through established discursive structures, dominated by the idea of symbolic representation of the people. The pressure which the divergent approach of extremism exerted on this dominant idea led in 1907 to a split in the Congress. In effect this split expelled the extremist strategy from the organization and reasserted the significance of symbolic representation in the national movement.

The Battlefield of Representation: Extremists, Moderates and Constitutional Reform

Despite the limited success of the counter-hegemonic strategy, the parameters of debate, the possibilities of elite nationalism, had nevertheless developed significantly. The state had to confront the growing counter-hegemonic potential of the strategy of boycott and *swadeshi*. It did so by attempting to marginalize extremism and actively accommodate moderatism, through the strategic offer of constitutional reform. Reform was an indication of political progress, signalling further affirmation of moderate methods. Why turn to new forms of articulating nationalism, the state in effect declared to the middle classes, when the old forms have reaped reward?

For the moderate Congress, this was a critical affirmation of its strategy. As G.K. Gokhale commented to the Secretary of State, John Morley, in 1908, without reforms 'the extremists will have their own way; confusion, danger, ruin will follow'.[11] Because of this pressure, the actual content of the reforms was of less significance to the moderates than the concept, the image, of reform taking place.[12] This is reflected in the Act which

eventually emerged in 1909 (known as the Morley–Minto reforms) after four years of deliberation. Other than formal recognition of separate Muslim interests, it appears that the Act had no substantial transformational effects on the structure of Indian government. The enlarged Legislative Councils were merely a surface concession; they lacked, through the composition of their new non-official majorities, any real substance of power. Minto, the Viceroy, admitted in 1909 that 'in fact I always thought our proposals are very conservative in many ways, and was surprised at the good reception they met with from Congress circles'.[13] A few months before the Bill was due to pass through Parliament, Morley wondered whether 'we shall not be laughed out of court for producing a mouse from the labouring mountain'.[14]

The moderates were nevertheless wholly committed to the successful working of the reforms, and this commitment drew them more and more into the state's hegemonic arrangement. When the 1908 Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Bill was being framed, for example, Morley prevailed on the Viceroy to water this oppressive measure down in order to protect the moderates from extremist 'attack'. 'Such an attack is sure to come,' he writes, 'and it is our business... not to do anything that will give substance to extremist taunts and reproaches against their moderate opponents.'[15] It was 'the business' of the state, then, to protect the status of the moderates within the national movement. The point is made more explicit by Lord Hardinge, Minto's successor, in relation to the 1911 retention of the Seditious Meetings Act. Hardinge again agreed to soften the act in deference to Gokhale and other elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council, commenting that

> We must be careful not to reduce the Act to an absolute nullity. Still, *some impression would be made* if the amendments to the Act were moved and accepted in open Council, so that the non-officials might get the credit for having effected something, and the government might *appear to have made some concession to opinions* in the Council.[16]

The Viceroy is not concerned so much with bowing to opposition within his Council, as with giving the 'appearance', creating the 'impression', of having done so. It was the image of constitutional process, as it had been the image of reform, which was central.

In both cases, then, the reforms represent an attempt to reiterate symbolic representation as a meaningful framework for the expression of political aspirations in the context of the emergence of a counter-hegemonic discourse in middle class nationalism. The moderates' pursuit of a vision of noble imperialism of the kind promised in 1858 resulted

in effective neutralization of their opposition to the colonial state; indeed, the evidence presented here suggests their partial assimilation into the actual structure of state hegemony.

One interesting and often cited feature of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 was the institution of exclusive Muslim colleges in the electorate for Provincial Legislative Councils. This, of course, explicitly affirmed the recognition of a Muslim constituency; just as surely, it affirmed the recognition of a Hindu constituency. In presenting the reforms to the House of Lords in 1909, Morley stated: 'Only let us not forget that the difference between Mahommedanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community.[17]

Morley's perception illustrates well the reason why the 'communal principle' was used as the basis for the programme of constitutional reform in India. For the state, religion was the defining principle of Indian identity, Indian history, and culture. This religiosity, furthermore, was a condition which percolated all strata of Indian society, including the middle class. When discussing the advisability of admitting an Indian to the Viceroy's Executive Council as part of the reform package, Minto expressed his doubts by stating that 'one must remember that such a colleague would necessarily become acquainted with all our State secrets, both interior and foreign, and that it is difficult to dissociate any Native, however able, from the influences of religion'.[18] Minto could not conceive of an Indian contribution to the ultimate decision-making body of the colonial state which was not articulated first and foremost from the standpoint of religion.

This is perhaps not surprising, given the pattern of colonialist thought on the nature of Indian society. It must also, however, be placed in the context of the Act as an attempt to reiterate symbolic representation as the language of political expression in colonial India. The Muslim and Hindu constituencies that the Act called up were in this sense no different to the kind of constituencies we have already noted in, for example, the Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha's approaches to government: symbolic constituencies, which gave meaning to the expression of indigenous 'rights' within the colonial discourse of organization. There is no doubt, however, that the government's invocation of these constituencies in 1909 was significant in mobilizing already somewhat urgent attempts to reify the community of Hindus. Indeed, the Morley–Minto reforms appear in this context to be part of a wider ideological trend which focused attention on the precise size of this community. An examination of this trend returns us to familiar territory.

Caste, the Census and the Development of Hindu Consciousness

Progressively in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea that numbers, demographic majorities, and minorities were directly related to power in the colonial polity was becoming embedded as a feature of Hindu consciousness in the public space. The trend may be perceived as a development of the ideological concern to identify the boundaries and precise qualities of Hinduism which has been noted as central to middle class conceptions of their religion. Enumeration was a natural correlation of such concerns: if one could identify exactly what Hinduism was and where its limits lay, one could also begin to understand exactly how big it was in objective terms. The principal means of approaching such questions was through the census, which by the early twentieth century had developed into a powerful signifier of the nature of Indian society. Nowhere was this power more evident, in fact, than in debates over the demography of Hinduism.

The Gait Circular

In November 1910 (i.e. just prior to the 1911 census), the *Tribune* of Lahore published a note prepared by E.A. Gait, the Commissioner of the Census, entitled 'The Census Returns of Hindus'.[19] Gait's note pointed to the difficulty experienced previously by census officers in acquiring accurate statistics relating to the size of the Hindu population because of the grey area on the boundaries of Hinduism occupied by low caste and *adivasi* groups. 'It is obviously absurd,' he says, 'to enter without comment as Hindus persons who do not worship the Hindu gods and are not admitted to Hindu temples, and who are not regarded by others, and do not themselves profess to be, Hindus.' The note then goes on to suggest that the approach of census officers could be standardized by the application of a series of set questions to be put to the potential Hindu. The questions he suggested related to such matters as the particular gods they worshipped, their access to temples and shrines, and their attitude towards untouchability.[20]

Historiographically, what is known as the Gait Circular has been presented as a classic policy of divide and rule.[21] Although the publication of the note in the indigenous press would suggest this,[22] it must also be set in the context of the genuine difficulty experienced by census officials attempting to enumerate Hinduism, as noted in the previous chapter. In this context the Gait Circular has some meaning as a standardizing model for this process of enumeration. Its implementation in the 1911

census, however, did not appear to have clarified the situation. The Superintendent of Census Operations for Central Provinces and Berar, J.T. Marten, notes almost apologetically that 'the question...as to what tests can be applied to differentiate a Hindu from a non-Hindu is not without considerable difficulty'.[23] Other Superintendents were equally circumspect, being unable to produce clear or consistent results.[24] Despite Gait's efforts, then, the 'considerable difficulty' associated with defining Hinduism was to remain a feature of the census.

The ramifications of the Gait Circular, however, inevitably stretched beyond the fine-tuning of colonial ethnography. As Lajpat Rai describes it:

> One fine morning the learned pandits of Kashi rose to learn that their orthodoxy stood the chance of losing the allegiance of six crores of human beings who, the Government and its advisors were told, were not Hindus, in so far as other Hindus would not acknowledge them as such, and would not even touch them.[25]

Rai makes this point in the context of his commentary on low caste *shuddhi* as an Arya Samaj contribution to Hinduism. The Circular 'galvanised the dying body of orthodox Hinduism into sympathy with its untouchable population'. Despite this claim, there is no evidence of direct involvement of orthodox organizations in untouchable or low caste *shuddhi* in the wake of the Gait Circular. Such organizations were still unable to surmount the problem of how to accommodate purified untouchables and low castes within the institutional structure of caste.[26] The general attitude remained tacit acceptance of the Arya-led Shuddhi Sabha, as long as newly purified groups remained in the relative back-waters of the Samaj's local structure (the Samaj Mandir), and the groups purified remained relatively 'soft targets' in terms of the level of their untouchability. The Gait Circular nevertheless exacerbated the problem of the legitimacy of high caste, middle class Hindus as the representatives of a religion inclusive of manifestly oppressed groups.[27] In this sense, it was perceived as a direct challenge to the power of the Hindu elite and it was a challenge articulated specifically through the institution of caste.

The Dying Race Theory

Caste and the census were also at the heart of the significant literature produced during this period by Colonel U.N. Mukherji of Calcutta. In 1909 Mukherji published a series of articles in the *Bengalee,* which later appeared as a pamphlet entitled *Hindus—A Dying Race.* Two years later, in direct response to the Gait Circular, Mukherji produced another publication entitled *Hinduism and the Coming Census: Christianity and*

Hinduism.[28] An indication of the impact of Mukherji's work is provided by Swami Shraddhanand's description of his meeting with the Colonel at this time:

> It was in February 1912 while standing in the spacious hall of the Aryasamaj in Calcutta, that a Bengali gentleman, dressed in European habits, was introduced, as Colonel U. Mukerji of the I.M.S., to me. His dress at first prejudiced me against him, but when he spoke to me of the pamphlet on which he was engaged and worked out mathematically how within the next 420 years the Indo-Aryan race would be wiped off the face of the earth unless steps were taken to save it, I learnt to respect his patriotism and resolved mentally that I would never be led away by mere appearance in judging of the worth of a man in future.
>
> Colonel Mukerji read out to me the following extract from 'Census of India report', vol 1, page 122:-
>
> In the whole of India the proportion of Hindus to the total population has fallen in 30 years from 74 to 69 percent, but this is partly due to the inclusion at each succeeding Census of new areas in which Hindus, if they are found at all, are a minority." I agreed with Colonel Mukerji in holding that the addition of new areas was immaterial when we had to consider the actual decline of Hindus in number throughout the whole continent of India. Thus did Colonel Mukerji work out the problem:-
>
> Taking 5 per cent to be the actual proportion of the decline of Hindus within thirty years, their present number of 69 per cent will be swallowed up within 14 × 30 = 420 years, if no efforts were made to put a stop to the present decline. I was impressed with the facts placed by Colonel Mukerji before me and as I was already interested in the work of reconversion of Hindus from Muhammadanism and Christianity I began a special study of the subject.[29]

This study was to bear fruit some fourteen years later in Shraddhanand's influential work, *Hindu Sangathan: Sàviour of the Dying Race.* By this time (1926), the idea of demographic decline had become entrenched as a core feature of Hindu nationalism and, as P.K. Datta has illustrated, it began to assume a symbolic, rhetorical quality which subordinated the unwieldy burden of statistical evidence.[30]

This, however, was a later development. In 1912, it was precisely the 'scientific' character of Mukherji's calculations which made them significant in the growing pressure to organize. The encounter between the urbane *bhadralok* Mukherji, member of the Indian Medical Services, and son-in-law of Sir Surendrananth Banerjea, with Mahatma Munshiram,[31] the fiery Arya Samaji and founder of the *Gurukul* movement, represents a classic meeting of divergent ideological streams of middle class India. Munshiram's natural inclination was to scorn Mukherji and

his 'European habits'—here was a reminder of everything he had cast off when he began work on the *Gurukul* in 1901. Yet he was soon swayed by the force of Mukherji's argument, and admonished himself for being 'led away by mere appearance'. Mukherji and Munshiram were united by a classic middle class rationalism, supported by the authoritative documentation of the census. The force of this rationalism was its apparent support for conceptual assumptions that underpinned the idea of an organized Hinduism: Hinduism as degenerate, a fragmented religion with a disparate, lacklustre following unconscious of the community that its faith constituted. Demographic decline reflected this degeneracy and increased the urgency with which it needed to be countered. According to Mukherji, it was not simply a question of moral turpitude; it was a question of survival.

In *A Dying Race* Mukherji focused on the plight of low castes as the well-spring of Hindu degeneracy. When discussing the Bagdi caste, he comments: 'He is lazy, thriftless, unreliable.... Hope, ambition, self-respect, self-reliance have no meaning for him, and things have been like this ever since he has been a bagdi.' And then, significantly, 'There is no object for which they can unite.'[32] Against this, Mukherji presents two images of organization. First, the organization of the colonial masters. An Englishman, he says, is 'a unit, and generally a very intelligent unit of a huge organisation where everyone, irrespective of rank or class, has a common idea and a common object'. Second, the organization of Islam in India which he relates to what he perceives as Islam's privileged position in the colonial order. This 'superiority,' he claims 'is entirely due to their religious revival and systematic moral training.'[33]

The image of organized Islam is of course particularly potent, because it is Islam which would replace Hinduism as the principal religio-social force as a result of demographic decline. In Mukherji's enduring phrase: 'They count their gains—we calculate our losses.'[34] This competitive demography indicates what I would perceive as a new alignment for the idea of Hindu organization; a specifically communal alignment, in its implicit antagonism towards Islam. Hinduism and Islam are represented as directly competing social blocs—they are polarized symbolically, in a way similar to the polarization of Aryas and Sanatanis as reformist and conservative in the 1880s. This of course was a polarization that was supported by the symbolic constituencies mooted in the Morley–Minto reform package. For middle class Hindus, the material existence of these constituencies could only be enhanced by the apparent scientific quality of Mukherji's initial proposition. Suddenly, one could talk about the Hindus as an objective force with clearly defined boundaries—admittedly

these boundaries were shrinking, under attack from external forces, but at least they were there, 'proven' by the authority of the census.

The concentration in *A Dying Race* on the problem of low caste degeneracy begs the question of caste reform. Mukherji confronts this head on, calling for the reform of Brahmanism as a prerequisite to Brahman-led low caste reform. This would entail the eradication of untouchability but not the wholesale disruption of the caste system. It is assumed that the reform of Brahmanism would in itself be a powerful enough force to produce a single Hindu society. Interestingly, the slightly later *Hinduism and the Coming Census,* eschews this need for reform. This publication was produced in response to the Gait Circular which threatened to altogether remove low castes from the Hindu equation. The 'scientific' ethnography which Mukherji used in 1909 to establish the dying race theory now turned against him through the simple and, as we have seen, quite extensively employed practice of census authorities shifting the goal posts, making their own pronouncements on where the limits of Hinduism lay. Mukherji now presented Hinduism as idealized pluralism in which even untouchability was justified as part of an organic whole.[35]

There is a shift here in Mukherji's perspective which may be seen as a shift from a vertical to a horizontal approach to the organization of Hinduism. This reflects the increasingly dominant position of the latter in the ideology of Hindu politics, as the issue of numbers became more entrenched as a signifier of power. In one way or another, both Gait and Mukherji presented a picture of the decline of Hinduism as a powerful force in society and politics through its numerical size in relation to other 'communities' identified by the census—principally, of course, the Muslim 'community'. The urgency implied by these images of decline could be addressed far more easily by advocates of horizontal organization: if numbers were to be the measure of power, then here was a means of presenting Hinduism as a homogeneous unit which side-stepped the difficult issues of how to address division or accommodate manifestly oppressed groups. In addition, the discourse of organization encouraged the production of idioms of representation which could easily accommodate these vast projections of community as constituencies. Horizontal organization could address this kind of constituency far more immediately than the long-term projections of vertical organization, entailing wholesale reform and all its possible ramifications. This is precisely what is indicated by the Hindu Sabha movement, which developed at this time as an attempt to represent 'Hindu interests' in the increasingly dynamic arena of colonial power.

The Hindu Sabha Movement: Organization as Paramount Objective

Various organizations emerged towards the end of the century which attempted to encompass Hindus as a constituency—among these, as we have seen, was the Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha. But it was the Punjabi organizations—Arya, Sanatani, and also Sikh—which initiated concrete moves towards the projection of this level of representation, as the political context began to shift in the early 1900s. From 1906 a series of Hindu Sahaik Sabhas were established which consisted of 'the cream of the Arya, Brahmo, Theosophist, Sikh, Sanatanist Societies'.[36] The principal aim of these Sabhas was to 'protect the interests of the Hindus by stimulating in them the feelings of self-respect, self-help and mutual co-operation so that by a combined effort there would be some chance of promoting the moral, intellectual, social and material welfare of the individuals of which the nation is composed'. The first significant Sabha was established in Lahore, at a meeting held on 4 August 1906.[37] This meeting framed a series of objectives:

1. To promote brotherly feelings amongst the various sections of the Hindu community;
2. To help destitute and disabled Hindus;
3. To act as Trustees for charitable, religious, educational and other purposes of such properties as may be entrusted to the Sabha;
4. To improve the moral, intellectual and material condition of the Hindus;
5. Generally to protect, promote and represent the interests of the Hindu community.[38]

Shortly afterwards, these were supplemented by a sixth objective: 'To help the establishment of similar Sabhas in other important towns of India.'[39] I have quoted all six objectives of the Lahore Sabha because I believe they indicate remarkably well the somewhat unfocused trajectory of the Sabha movement. Beyond the desire to expand, it is difficult to extrapolate any definite programme of action from them. Despite the fact that the Arya Samaj was influential in setting up the Sabha, then, the Lahore objectives reflect the preoccupation of horizontal organization precisely: the need to bind together, to 'protect, promote and represent', whilst avoiding any action disruptive of established social practice.

The Lahore Sabha was followed by similar organizations established at Multan, Sialkot, Gujranwala, and Lyallpur.[40] The common theme was collaboration: inaugural meetings were attended by the 'heads of all sections' coming together to 'work with co-operation on a single

platform'.[41] The idea, then, was to create a conglomeration of organizations which together would form a spectrum of religious affiliation. As long as the spectrum presented a coherent image, it could claim to 'represent the interests of the Hindu community.' The constituency of Hindus is created by binding together in one organization a series of existing organizations which purported to represent the various components of this larger constituency. Although it is a somewhat more elaborate mechanism, this image replicates the kind of symbolic representation projected by the Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha. This point is supported by the fact that the kind of organizations involved were almost exclusively middle class: the *Tribune's* list above confirms this doubly, by emphasizing the elitism of those involved ('the *cream* of the Arya, Brahmo, Theosophist,'etc.). A significant ideological convergence is apparent in this image. Horizontal organization meshes with symbolic representation, to the extent that the latter constitutes the means of achieving the former. At the same time, the coherent image, the apparent unity, becomes the touchstone for the Sabha movement's representative claims. The two ideological forms began to develop together, mutually affirming their legitimacy within the colonial discourse of organization.

One direct result of this was that *sanatana dharma* emerged as central to the coherence of the Sabha movement. Projecting a spectrum of Hinduism meant providing a strategically central position to orthodoxy, with its implication of the largest constituency of Hindus. *Sanatana dharma* had by the turn of the century become entrenched in the public space as a signifier of this orthodoxy, represented by the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal.[42] Consequently these organizations were powerful movers in the character of unified Hinduism projected by the Sabha movement.[43]

Self Abnegation: Defining the Structure of Hindu Politics

In the context of the Congress split in 1907, and the constitutional reforms of 1909, the movement gathered pace despite its rather vague beginnings. Work was focused on the reform package and on the Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1901, which was perceived as particularly discriminating against the urban-based Hindu middle class.[44] As well as addressing communications to both the provincial and central governments on these issues during 1909,[45] the Sabha made its presence felt by voicing concern over the reform package to the Viceroy in person, as part of a welcome address during a short visit to Lahore in April. The address was reported to have 'touched the Viceroy to the quick and led His Excellency to remark that the questions raised in it did not suit the

occasion'.[46] This incident was widely commented on in the press and the Sabha consolidated the resulting heightened profile by preparing for a Provincial Hindu Conference in Lahore in October 1909, as a demonstration of the unity of Hindus in Punjab.

A prime mover in these preparations for the Conference was Lala Lal Chand, the first prominent leader of the fully established Sabha movement. Lal Chand was a well-known Samajist of the 'College branch'. He was also a judge in Lahore and one of the founders of the Punjab National Bank.[47] Beginning in February 1909, he published a series of articles in *The Punjabee* under the title *Self-Abnegation in Politics,* which have since gained stature as a 'foundation text' of the Sabha movement.[48] The somewhat obscure title refers to the attitude of Hindus towards politics, which Chand perceived as self-denying, always allowing the claims of other forces in society to take precedence. The concession of separate Muslim electorates in the Morley–Minto reforms is presented as the apotheosis of the tendency.

Blame for this loss of self-assertion is laid squarely at the door of the Congress, an organization that 'makes the Hindu forget that he is a Hindu and tends to swamp his communal individuality *[sic!]* into an Indian ideal, thus making him break with all his past traditions and past glory'.[49] The Congress ideal of a composite nationhood, he continues, 'was not only erroneous to start with, but ...has become impossible under the declared hostile attitude of the other community.' The only way forward, then, was 'to start anew on a fresh basis, abandoning, if not pulling down, the fabric which instead of giving political shelter and refuge has exposed the (Hindu) community to winds and hailstorms from every quarter'.[50]

Lal Chand's agenda was explicitly political. His articles reiterate again and again the point that 'the object is not to discuss the general amelioration of the Hindu community in its various aspects', but rather 'the political aspect of the Hindu community *under its present* environments'.[51] As such, he largely sidesteps the issue of identity, of what precisely constitutes the Hindu community which he is addressing. Beyond the invocation of fairly widely understood notions of Hindu history and an attempt at defining patriotism in terms of community as opposed to territory,[52] Lal Chand does not appear to be overly concerned with issues of culture, religion, or ethnicity. He asserts the need for consolidation, but it is a political consolidation and one might also say a symbolic consolidation:

> Weak and disunited we are and divided into various sects. But the remedy lies in bringing the sections on a common political platform where they would

realise that they are merely branches of the same stock and community, and not lead them further astray and to teach them as if no such community exists or has a political status.[53]

The structure of the Hindu Sabha, then, with its spectrum of religious organizations, is legitimized here. The existence of the constituency—the Hindu community—is ensured by the presentation of a united front of these 'various sects' in the Sabha organization. The unified Sabha, then, becomes a powerful symbol of the consolidated community.

This inclination towards the value of symbolic representation is reiterated in Chand's response to the Morley–Minto reforms. This needs to be seen not only in terms of the recognition of separate Muslim interests, but also in terms of the increasing impotence of Congress moderatism and the related ideological struggle to assert counter-hegemony as the strategic focus of Indian nationalism. Lal Chand rejects the latter in no uncertain terms. His understanding of politics is 'in the sense of relations between the governed and the governors'; he does not therefore endorse politics based on the 'uprooting of these relations.'[54] 'It is mere tall talk', he continues, 'to speak of self-growth and self-development' when the community is so weak. Because of this it is of 'paramount importance to reconcile, and not to make needlessly antagonistic, the powers that be'.[55] Later he refers to the split in the Congress at Surat in 1907 as a result of the clash of these opposing strategies towards the state:

> Self-help [i.e. *swadeshi* and the rejection of state-centred politics] ...threatened at one time to cause a split in the Congress camp and not improbably did cause the split. The advocates of the theory [i.e. extremists] would discredit their opponents [moderates] by calling them mendicants. Their scheme was to make no appeals to Government nor send any memorials, but to achieve political ascendancy without Government help. The theory is attractive in form as it appeals to self-pride but I, at any rate, am at a loss to understand how resolutions passed at meetings will redress the grievances unless it is intended—whether so addressed in form or not—that these should reach Government and induce it to take measures for redress.[56]

The politics of extremism, then, do not fall within the purview of this prominent judge of Lahore.

The moderate Congress, however, had also patently failed to deliver any tangible political gain. 'When the time came for rewarding the labours a little, the substantial portion of the reward was assigned to the other community.'[57] The problem, however, lay not in the structure of

Congress politics—i.e. the 'appeal to the authorities...to address the wrong'—but rather in the projection of the Congress constituency as a united nation. When Lal Chand talks of starting anew, of pulling down the fabric of contemporary politics, he is referring largely to the substitution of this constituency for a Hindu constituency. In this context, the appropriation of the existing political discourse, with symbolic representation at its heart, is the logical means of representing the putative constituency. Thus at the very end of his series of letters, he proposes:

> the substitution of Hindu Sabhas for Congress Committees, of a Hindu press for the Congress press, organisation of a Hindu Defence Fund with regular offices and machinery for collecting information and seeking redress by self-help, self-ameliorations and petitions and memorials supplemented by agitation in the press and advocacy through trusted leaders in matters both special and common but dominated primarily by regard for Hindu interests.[58]

It is possible that Lal Chand's approach in *Self Abnegation* was influenced by the government's crackdown on Arya Samaj involvement in politics following the Punjab disturbances of 1907.[59] Certainly he places great emphasis on his objection to the Congress demand for self government within the Commonwealth as an 'impracticable demand and a pure source of irritation', and is keen at other points to emphasize his loyalty.[60] It is in any case perhaps not surprising that such a prominent subject of the British Indian state should be anything other than an advocate of strictly legitimate politics.

What is interesting, however, is that this dry and somewhat unwieldy series of articles should emerge as what Jaffrelot calls the 'ideological charter of the Hindu Sabha'.[61] As Hindu politics emerged, it became fused with the idea of symbolic representation, a method of structuring politics which neatly avoided the thorny question of who precisely was being represented. Conforming precisely to the state's own idea of how a political organization should operate (not only in the sense of symbolic representation, indeed, but also of course in the sense that the projected constituency was—in some sense at least—religious), Lal Chand's vision of the Hindu Sabha intended to call the constituency of Hindus into being simply through the power of political articulation in the context of discursive change.

In April 1909, whilst this 'ideological charter' of the Sabha was still unravelling in the pages of the *Punjabee,* the prospects for the establishment of a unified Hindu constituency in the Punjab were rocked by events in the district town of Hoshiarpur. The local Arya Samaj performed a *shuddhi* ceremony during April to purify a group of Chamars. As

stated earlier, the general attitude of high caste Hindus in the Punjab was to tolerate Arya *shuddhi* ceremonies, as long as the groups purified were relatively 'soft targets' in terms of their caste status. The Hoshiarpur *shuddhi* , however, targeted the particularly untouchable Chamars. It provoked a vicious backlash orchestrated by the local Sanatana Dharma Sabha, which led to extensive comment in the Punjabi press. The Lahore-based *Akhbar-i-Am* published a letter from Bawa Narain Singh of Hoshiarpur, which announced the outcasting of local Samaj members with the ominous statement: 'Aryas should begin by sinking their own wells or they will die from thirst.'[62] The Hoshiarpur-based *Tilak* reported that a group of Aryas who had gone to fetch water were 'given a severe beating by about 40 Sanatanists', and also that a secret society called the Sudhar Sabha had been established 'to parade the streets in groups of from five to ten persons and...belabour with lathis solitary Samajists they may meet'.[63] This hostility towards the Samaj was also expressed at a more general level and collaboration in the Sabha movement was called into question. The editor of the Lahore-based *Hindu Sanatan Dharam Gazette,* for example, launched a bitter invective against the Samaj, concluding that 'Sanatanists should have nothing to do with Hindu Sabhas, the Punjabi organisers of which consist mostly of Aryas,' and that 'these bodies (i.e. the Sabhas) will prove extremely injurious to the interests of Hindus'.[64]

The response of the Arya Samaj is an interesting reflection of the dilemma it faced in its relationship with Sanatanis during this period. The Hoshiarpur Samaj immediately appealed to the powerful Lahore Samaj for help in its predicament. The Lahore Samaj then attempted to use the new Hindu Sabha machinery to effect a rapprochement.[65] This is indicative of the Samajists' commitment to the idea of wider organization and to the Sabha movement as a means of diffusing tension. But it was not the only form of response. Two or three weeks after the Hoshiarpur incident, Lajpat Rai wrote an article in the *Arya Gazette* which was far more openly confrontational. Rai attacked caste as 'one of the chief causes of the national and social ruin which has overtaken Hindus', although he did qualify this by noting that 'in olden times the [*varna*] system was not characterized by its present rigidity', thus remaining within the broad ambit of Arya doctrine. He then appealed to his fellow Samajists to continue their *shuddhi* work, 'bearing in mind that the seed which they are sowing is being sown by order of God', and predicted that 'the Sanatanists, who thirst for the blood of the Aryas, will eat of [the fruits of their labours] and offer prayers for the latter'.[66] This then presents an alternative view of the development of Hindu

unity, in which the reformist principles of the Arya Samaj are ascendent and in particular the transformation of Hindu society constitutes the basis for future unity.[67] It is clear from these reactions to Hoshiarpur that *shuddhi* was an issue at the heart of the debate over the nature of Hindu unity, Hindu organization. Against this vibrant, sometimes violent backdrop of ideological confrontation, then, the first Hindu Conference was held in October.

The 1909 Hindu Conference: Establishing the Paramount Objective

Although the Conference was not held until the 21st and 22nd of October, from early in that month the press began setting the tone. In particular, the Arya daily the *Punjabee* began collecting comments from the national press which indicated that the Sabha movement 'has made its infant existence, albeit devoid of any achievements, felt'.[68] For example, it quoted admiringly from the *Reis and Rayyat,* a Calcutta English language weekly, which had suggested a (somewhat vague) definition of the parameters of Hindu unity in anticipation of the Conference: 'The Hindus scattered all over the Indian peninsula are divided into various forms. But there is the bedrock of uniformity in the belief in the Vedas and some other essential dogmas.'[69] A few days later, an approving article in the *Bengalee* was extensively quoted. This article compares the unity of the Sabha movement to the fractious recent history of Congress nationalism: 'While the echoes of the Congress controversy continue to reach our ears, the great Hindu community of the Punjab are silently maturing their plans and are slowly but steadily moving forward towards the formation of a great Hindu federation.' The *Bengalee* also had a suggestion for the defining principle of unification in this federation: 'Race, and not religion, ought to be the guiding principle of the organisation. For the Hindu is the most tolerant of human beings and the Hindu faith the most comprehensive that one can think of, embracing within its fold the believers in cults and creeds of the widest divergence.'[70] Although it may not have rung true in Hoshiarpur, this idea of tolerant 'unity in diversity', based on a range of unifying principles, was the overriding theme of pre-Conference comment. A confirmation of this unity, it appeared, was the most significant, the most sought after objective that the Conference could aspire to. As the *Punjabee's* Special Conference issue commented, 'This is the first time, we believe, in the history of modern India, that the Hindus as a body have sought to give expression to their communal consciousness, as distinguished from the detached movement of sects and castes.'[71]

The importance of *sanatana dharma* to the efficacy of this unity is indicated by the allocation of posts at the 1909 Conference. Although Lal Chand was Chair of the Reception Committee, the Presidency was offered to Sir C.P. Chatterjee, 'a patron of the Sanatana Dharma Sabha'.[72] As well as his association with orthodoxy, the non-Punjabi Chatterjee signified the importance of communal identity over regional identity; he was 'a Hindu first and a Bengali afterwards'.[73]

The Conference was attended by some 3,000 persons on each day. Although it was a provincial Conference, delegates were also drawn from the North West Frontier Province, with 'some visitors from UP and other parts of the country'.[74] The importance of Sanatani sensibilities is again signified by the careful segregation of participants in the *pandal* according to caste.[75] The unity of Hinduism was not to be threatened by delegates' anxieties over potential pollution through the proximity of other delegates.

Lal Chand's address to the Conference indicates many of the concerns and dilemmas that defined organized Hinduism at this time. He began by referring to Mukherji's *Hindus: A Dying Race* as a reflection of the resurgence of 'Hindu self-consciousness'. 'Numbers carry great weight in this age,' he commented, '...and help materially in deciding the fate of any struggle. The progress of a community is now as much measured by its numerical strength as by its moral and economic achievements.'[76] He then went on to urge the point made in *Self Abnegation* that for Hindus defining this community was simply a question of articulating it at the level of colonial politics. Although he did refer to the 'needless corrosive differences' of subcaste in his critique of contemporary Hindu society, as any good Arya of the time would, his solution was based firmly in the realm of symbolic representation. 'All that is needed,' he says, 'is to advocate the interests of the community at large and the moment we realise this germinal idea, this sacred obligation, ...all self-imposed differences and schisms will vanish away like chaff.' As soon as Hinduism is presented as united politically, then, social divisiveness will disappear. The image of a politically organized Hinduism assumes the status of principal objective in Chand's vision of the Sabha movement.

The nature of this image of organized Hinduism, furthermore, is unequivocally horizontal. Commenting on the predicament of low castes and untouchables, Lal Chand states:

> It is not pressed that the feet be given the status of the head, but it is certainly enjoined that their position as essential parts of the 'sacred' living body be duly recognised, that they be not neglected and do receive their proper share of

nourishment, education and enlightenment, to enable them to perform their own function to the best advantage of the community and the body politic.[77]

No change in status for low castes and untouchables, then, but an entitlement to respect for their position and role in society. This is the main thrust, as we have seen, of ideas of the horizontal organization of Hinduism—in particular it reflects the Sanatani attitude towards caste.

The influence of Sanatani concerns is also evident in the resolutions that emerged from the Conference. Not surprisingly, consensual issues were prominent: the promotion of Sanskrit and Hindi, support for cow protection and *ayurvedic* medicine, the promotion of 'brotherly feelings' among Hindus, and a commitment 'to consolidate and strengthen the sense of common nationality'. These were accompanied by more hard-nosed resolutions regarding the Punjab Alienation of Land Act and representation in Legislative Councils, which reflected the new political presence indicated by *Self Abnegation*. Several resolutions, however, were not put before the Conference, ostensibly because of lack of time. These included Arya issues such as support for widows, low caste amelioration, and the removal of subcaste distinctions.[78] The idea that these resolutions were dropped not due to lack of time but due to 'strife apprehended over them between the orthodox and the unorthodox' was denied at length after the Conference,[79] but undoubtedly the need for consensus was a prominent factor and the *Punjabee* rounded off its denial of the above with a reminder that the main objective was 'union as opposed to division'.

One of the resolutions which was approved was that calling for the establishment of Hindu Sabhas 'all over the country' and holding an annual all-India Hindu Conference. This may be seen as an extension of the point noted in relation to the objectives of the Lahore Sabha in 1906, that the desire to expand stands out as a definite feature of the movement. Certainly the Conference appears to have been widely reported in the national press. The *Punjabee* continued its championing of the cause by reproducing comments on the Conference from papers published across the subcontinent.[80] Generally, the comments welcomed the Sabha movement, particularly in the context of constitutional reform and the perceived anti-Hindu/pro-Muslim bias of the government. Expansion was nevertheless fitful. In 1911 the first Hindu Sabha was established in the United Provinces, and here it developed largely independent of the Arya Samaj.[81] By 1915 enough momentum had been generated to establish the All India Hindu Sabha as a representative body for local and provincial Sabhas. It is this body which was to become fully active in the 1920s as the Hindu Mahasabha.[82]

Throughout this period the emphasis on the need for an image of 'union as opposed to division', which had emerged in 1909 as closely linked to the discursive implications of symbolic representation, remained central. By the 1920s, when the *sangathan* movement dominated the agenda of the Hindu Mahasabha, this notion of consolidation had developed into a defining principle of Hindu nationalism.

Notes

1. The takeover was followed by the establishment of the Deccan Sabha to represent the interests of moderate and liberal opinion in Poona; see S. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale,* p. 77.
2. *Kesari,* 5 December 1896, Report on the Native Press in Bombay Presidency (hereafter RNP Bom) No. 51 of 1896.
3. *Kesari,* 22 December 1896, RNP Bom No. 52 of 1896.
4. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya,* p. 129.
5. Quoted in Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak,* p. 73.
6. *Mahratta* , 21 February 1897, RNP Bom No. 9 of 1897.
7. *Kesari,* 23 March 1897, RNP Bom No. 13 of 1897.
8. *Kesari,* 6 April 1897, RNP Bom No. 15 of 1897.
9. *Kesari,* 26 September 1905, RNP Bom No. 39 of 1905.
10. *Kesari,* 19 February 1907, RNP Bom No. 8 of 1907.
11. Reported by Morley to Minto, 4 December 1908, quoted in Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale,* p. 237.
12. On this question of image, it is interesting to note Morley's comment to Minto as early as June 1906: 'Not one whit more than you do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adapt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India.' Nevertheless, he continues, 'the *spirit* of English institutions is a different thing.' Quoted in ibid., p. 186.
13. Minto to Lansdowne, 18 March 1909; quoted in B.R. Nanda, *Gokhale: the Indian Moderates and the British Raj* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1977), p. 318.
14. Morley to Minto, 6 August 1908, quoted in Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale,* p. 237.
15. Morley to Minto, 28 May 1908, quoted in Nanda, *Gokhale,* p. 303.
16. Quoted in ibid., p. 383 (emphasis added).
17. Morley on the Indian Councils Bill, 23 February 1909; in Philips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan,* p. 86.
18. Minto to Morley, 5 July 1906; see ibid., p. 75.

19. *Tribune,* 12 Nov. 1910; the editorial commented that it was publishing the note as no paper had yet done so and 'there seems to be a great deal of feeling on the subject and several papers have commented upon it in the dark'.
20. See ibid; Gait's suggested questions—there were six in all— were meant to be commented upon and amended: 'I should be glad to know which of them is regarded by the best opinion in each province, etc, as the most decisive, or whether there are any others which should be substituted for them.'
21. See, for example, Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 306; P.K. Dutta calls it 'a blatant act of colonial engineering'; see his 'Dying Hindus—Production of Hindu Communal Common Sense in Early 20th Century Bengal', in *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 28, no. 25, 19 June 1993, pp. 1305–19: p. 1306; it is interesting to note that the Circular was accompanied by a further suggested innovation—the separation of Hindi and Urdu in the language column; see 'Selections from the Native Newspapers Published in United Provinces' 1911, nos 1&2.
22. The *Tribune,* 12 November 1910, along with numerous other papers, attributed Gait's note to the intervention of the Muslim League.
23. Marten tested eighty-two castes whose strength exceeded 1 per cent of the population of the Central Provinces and Berar. Of these 19 per cent were said to deny the supremacy of Brahmans; 43 per cent did not receive a *mantra* from a Brahman or other guru; 20 per cent denied the authority of the Vedas; 22 per cent did not worship 'the great Hindu gods'; 25 per cent were denied access to temples; and 33 per cent ate beef. See *Census of India 1911,* vol. X, Central Provinces and Berar Part 1: Report (Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1912), p. 73.
24. The United Provinces report states that there were 'very few in this province...who, whilst returning themselves as of the Hindu religion, do not fulfil any of the prescribed tests. It is very rare indeed that no test at all is fulfilled by any one tribe.' See *Census of India 1911,* vol. XV, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh Part 1: Report (Government Press, Allahabad, 1912), p. 123. The Bombay report shows little enthusiasm for the project, listing castes that could be excluded without enumerating them in proportion to the Hindu population. See *Census of India 1911,* vol. II, Bombay, Part 1: Report (Government Central Press, Bombay, 1912), pp. 65–6. The Punjab report consistently excluded not untouchables or tribals but reformist groups such as Arya Samajis, Brahmo Samajis, and Dev Dharmis. See *Census of India 1911,* vol. XIV, Punjab, Part 1: Report (Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1912), p. 109.
25. Lajpat Rai, *A History of the Arya Samaj,* p. 124.
26. See *Arya Patrika,* 4 January 1911. Although the *Patrika* talks approvingly of the galvanizing effect of the Gait Circular on Sanatana Dharma Sabhas,

it is unable to give examples of Sanatani involvement in *shuddhi*. Instead, it notes that Sanatanis have 'declared it in bold and unambiguous terms that the Depressed classes are part and parcel of the body politic,' citing as an example the establishment of 'a school for low classes' linked to Central Hindu College, Benaras. Quoted in Jones, *Arya Dharm,* p. 309.

27. See Punjab Native Newspaper Reports (hereafter PNNR) 1910, pp. 1018–92 for numerous examples of the anxiety of the Hindu press over this issue; local Hindu Sabhas, for example, were exhorted by the *Parkash* of Lahore (15 November 1910) to 'adopt resolutions declaring the [depressed] classes to be their kith and kin, while the Punjab Hindu Sabha should, on the strength of this unanimous declaration, submit a representation to Government protesting against the proposed division of the Hindu community'.
28. U.N. Mukherji, *Hindus—A Dying Race* (M. Bannerjee, Calcutta, 1909); and *Hinduism and the Coming Census: Christianity and Hinduism* (Srikali Ghosh, Calcutta, 1911).
29. Swami Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan: Saviour of the Dying Race* (Arjun Press, Delhi, 1926), pp. 14–15.
30. As Datta puts it, 'The retention of the emotional at the cost of the mathematical'; see 'Dying Hindus', p. 1315.
31. Swami Shraddhanand was the name assumed by Munshiram when he took *sannyas* in 1917.
32. Quoted in Datta, 'Dying Hindus', p. 1308.
33. Ibid., p. 1307.
34. For Datta's account of the significance of this phrase in communal literature, see ibid., p. 1305.
35. Ibid., p. 1310.
36. *Tribune,* 24 August 1906.
37. The *Tribune* of 2 October 1906 claimed that the actual first Sabha was established at Srinagar in June 1906.
38. *Tribune,* 24 August 1906.
39. *Tribune,* 25 August 1906.
40. See accounts in *Tribune* throughout September 1906; many of these Sabhas were established in the wake of a provincial tour by Pandit Ram Bhaj Datta and his wife Sarala Devi. Datta was a Samajist of the 'College faction' who in 1907 was to become the first President of the Punjab-based Bharat Shuddhi Sabha, established to 'devote itself exclusively to (shuddhi) work' and claiming to represent 'the various Hindu societies' and so have the sympathy of 'the entire Hindu population'. Passages are from a speech delivered by Datta in Allahabad in 1911, quoted in Ghai, *The Shuddhi Movement in India,* p. 80. On Datta see also Jaffrelot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism in the Punjab', p. 26.
41. See *Tribune,* 2 September, 8 September 1906.

42. Re. the claim made by the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal in 1902 to represent 'the whole of the orthodox classes of the Hindus in India'.
43. In making this point I am arguing against the line taken particularly by Jaffrelot that the Sabha movement was an extension of Arya Samaj ideology; see Jaffrelot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism in the Punjab', pp. 26–33.
44. For a summary of the provisions of this Act and its implications, see ibid., pp. 22–3.
45. In April and July; see ibid., p. 27.
46. *Jhang Sial,* 17 April 1909; PNNR 1909. For further examples of press comment, see the *Hindustan* and the *Watan,* 16 April 1909, in PNNR.
47. Jaffrelot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism', p. 27.
48. They were later published in book form: Lal Chand, *Self-Abnegation in Politics* (Central Yuvak Sabha, Lahore, 1938); Jaffrelot has gone as far as to describe *Self Abnegation* as a Hindu version of the two nation theory see Jafferolot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism', p. 28.
49. Chand, *Self Abnegation in Politics,* pp. 112–3.
50. Ibid., p. 113.
51. Ibid., p. 98 (emphasis in original).
52. Ibid., pp. 102-3; this is a notion which Lajpat Rai had been advocating even in 1899, a point noted by Jaffrelot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism', p. 32.
53. Chand, *Self Abnegation in Politics,* p. 118.
54. Ibid., p. 99.
55. Ibid., p. 100.
56. Ibid., p. 109; Chand continues: 'The fallacy of the position taken up is rendered absolutely self-evident by actual results. An attempt to boycott Government service and even honorary service failed miserably.'
57. Ibid., p. 112.
58. Ibid., p. 125.
59. See Jones, *Arya Dharm,* pp. 269–79 on this government crackdown.
60. Chand, *Self Abnegation in Politics,* p.116; see also, for example, p. 99.
61. Jaffrelot, 'The Genesis and Development of Hindu Nationalism', p. 28.
62. *Akhbar-i-Am,* 5 May 1909; see PNNR No.19 of 1909. Bawa Narain Singh's opposition is indicative of the way in which low caste *shuddhi* polarized middle class Hindu opinion—some twenty years earlier Singh had been publicly thanked by the Amritsar Arya Samaj for a donation of Rs 80 000 to the local Dayanand Anglo Vedic College; see *Qaisari,* 16 May 1885, in Selections from the Vernacular Newspapers in the Punjab, North Western Provinces, Oudh, Central Provinces, Central India and Rajputana, 1885.
63. *Tilak,* 6 May 1909; see PNNR No. 21 of 1909.

64. *Hindu Sanatana Dharam Gazette,* 28 April 1909; see PNNR No. 19 of 1909; Aryas are described as 'the killers of kine', and 'the character of their women is open to objection'; the *Satyarth Prakash* is described as 'a sinful and filthy book'.
65. See ibid: 'The Lahore Samaj intends bringing pressure to bear on the Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Hoshiarpur, through the Hindu Sabha.'
66. *Arya Gazette,* 20 May 1909, quoted in PNNR No. 21 of 1909.
67. Certainly the Hoshiarpur Samaj appeared to survive the storm of 1909 and carry on with its *shuddhi* programme amongst Chamars. The Report on the Punjab Census 1911 notes that 'information received from the Hoshiarpur district shows that 722 persons of the Kabirpanthi sect (Chamar by caste) have been elevated by the Arya Samaj in 49 villages of the Hoshiarpur and Kangra Districts within the last four years'. See *Census of India 1911,* Vol. XIV, Punjab Pt. 1, p. 152. Ghai also notes that one of the Kabirpanthi Chamars went on to become an MP and one a prominent figure in the Sabha movement; see, *The Shuddhi Movement in India,* p. 75, n. 137.
68. *Punjabee,* 7 October 1909.
69. *Punjabee,* 5 October 1909.
70. *Punjabee,* 9 October 1909.
71. *Punjabee,* Special Conference Issue, 23 October 1909.
72. *Punjabee,* 4 November 1909.
73. *Punjabee,* 26 October 1909.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., 'Every incomer was taken to the place specially reserved for gentlemen of his class by an obliging and energetic volunteer.'
76. *Punjabee,* Special Conference Issue, 23 October 1909.
77. Ibid.
78. *Punjabee,* 26 October 1909.
79. See *Punjabee,* 30 October 1909.
80. During November the *Punjabee* reproduced comment from the *Bengalee,* the *Indian Patriot, Amrita Bazaar Patrika, Indian Social Reformer, Hindu Patriot, Indian Mirror,* the *Advocate,* and the *Spectator.*
81. Gordon's analysis of the 1915 UP Provincial Committee of the Hindu Sabha indicates the prominence of Sanatani representation. He also states that 'not one member of the committee has been identified as belonging to the Arya Samaj', although there was strong representation from the UP Social Conference. See R. Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915–1926', in *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 9, 1975, pp. 145–204: p. 154.
82. The new name was bestowed at the Hardwar session of the Sabha, 1921.

5

Contextualizing Hindu Nationalism: The Development of Political Discourse in the Post-War Years

There is no doubt that the First World War and immediate post-War years had a significant impact on the character of politics in colonial India. Most fundamentally, the War caused lasting changes in the colonial economy, strengthening the position of the indigenous bourgeoisie whilst at the same time radically increasing hardship for the majority of the population.[1] One result of these changes was an increased level of politicization and class consciousness. Bourgeois wealth was stimulated by a series of protectionist measures taken by the Indian government and an accompanying expansion of industries associated with War production. This led to greater commitment amongst industrialists to the idea of self-government, as they realized materially just how damaging pro-British state intervention had been in the past. At the same time, economic deprivation increased the hostility of some class blocs towards the government; this was particularly so amongst certain sections of the peasantry which felt the full impact of the rise in prices.[2]

In the short term, increased politicization was capitalized upon by elite nationalists through the Home Rule Leagues. Engineered by Tilak and Annie Besant during 1916 and 1917, the Leagues sought to establish indigenous administration within the British Empire as the overall objective of the nationalist movement. In addition, the Leagues operated through a network of small-scale political organizations, utilizing and growing out of specific local contexts.[3] This model allowed for the extension of elite-led nationalist politics on to district and local levels, although the Leagues still drew their support mostly from middle class elements at these levels.[4] As such the Leagues played an important role

in the preparation of the ground for the restructuring of the Congress framework after the Nagpur session of 1920. This restructuring provided the framework for mass participation campaigns under Gandhi. An intimation of the Leagues' role here is provided by the extensive use of League machinery during the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in 1919. In western India particularly, League channels were used to disseminate propaganda and guidelines for the implementation of *satyagraha*.[5] In terms of the development of nationalist strategy, then, the Leagues provided an organizational network which actively increased the legitimacy of Congress claims to represent the people.

The issues raised by the operation of the Leagues—representation and Home Rule—are particularly significant in the light of the Montagu–Chelmsford reform package, which was produced partly in response to these developments in the national movement. The 'Montford' reforms constitute a discernible shift in the strategy of the state from that of 1909. Most significant was the assertion, as part of Montagu's initial declaration in 1917, that reforms could be seen as part of a gradual process of development towards self-rule. This was, of course, always a connotation of benevolent imperialism, but here was an explicit statement of the objective and of the status of reform in relation to it. In effect, this declaration appeared to indicate the government's complete acceptance of the strategy of hegemonic nationalism—the moderates' policy of state-led progression towards *swaraj*.

The implications of the 1917 declaration were apparently reiterated by the character of the reforms which emerged in the Government of India Act of 1919. Increased representation and executive control were presented as the substance that underpinned the government's commitment. Provincial electorates were increased to an aggregate of around five and a half million and Provincial Assemblies became responsible for certain areas of government.[6] This system, known as dyarchy, ceded control of departments such as Education and Health, whilst retaining critical areas of the administration such as Finance and Law and Order. As Sarkar has pointed out, this meant that real power still eluded indigenous control.[7] The question remained, then, as to whether the government was really serious about the commitment to self-rule; certainly the system of dyarchy and the still very limited extension of the franchise suggested that the notion of symbolic representation remained an integral feature of colonial rule.

One further feature of the Montford reforms which must be taken into account is the extension of the principle of separate electorates.[8] Not only did the reforms reaffirm the notion of reserved Muslim seats;

they went further, by sanctioning non-Brahman reservations in Madras Presidency.[9] In the same manner as the Gait Circular, this decision had a galvanizing effect on the ideology of organized Hinduism, as it drew attention yet again to the question of where to set the limits of Hinduism.

In these various contexts, then, middle class politics emerged in the post-War years as an enormously complex arena. Examining the interplay of contesting ideologies in the public space during this period constitutes the subject matter of this chapter, with the objective of identifying developments in political discourse which were crucial to the emergence of politically viable Hindu nationalism. I will concentrate on two areas: the way in which Hindu identity became entrenched as a feature of political discourse during this period; and before this, the way in which counter-hegemony developed as Indian nationalist strategy and the profound impact of this pattern of development on established political discourses. The complex developments in these areas provide the context for the organization and rapid growth of Hindu nationalism as both an ideological and institutional presence in Indian politics from the 1920s onwards.

Towards a New Discourse of Organization

The entry of M.K. Gandhi into Indian politics towards the end of the second decade of the twentieth century must be seen in the context of the developing radical trend in elite-led nationalism over the previous twenty-five years. As we have seen, it was a trend which saw the progressive movement of nationalist strategy away from symbolic representation which characterized the articulation of politics within the colonial discourse of organization. Gandhi was a feature of this developing trend and when he attended the Gujarat Political Conference at Godhra in November 1917, he signified just how far this discourse had been challenged.

From the outset, he made it clear that this was to be a Conference of and for the peasants of Gujarat. This was part of the wider assertion that the peasantry in general was the key to nationalist success—without peasant support, there would be no *swaraj*. As such, he did not go through established channels (i.e. the Bombay Congress) before arranging the Conference. He simply invited leading nationalists to attend.[10] In addition, he declared that as the Conference was for the peasants, all speeches should be in Gujarati. This caused several prominent politicians difficulty, and Tilak insisted on speaking in Marathi, prompting the Mahatma to counsel the great Lokamanya publicly: 'Though he is

advanced in years, it would be but proper if he engages a Gujerathi teacher and picks up the language. We belong to the Bombay Presidency and should, therefore, learn both languages in order that we might know what the people feel.' He followed this through by observing archly that 'Queen Victoria learned Urdu'.[11] Lastly, Gandhi tore up the standard resolution declaring loyalty to the Crown, reportedly commenting that 'their loyalty could be presumed until they declared themselves rebel'.[12] This resolution, of course, was an integral feature of conference practice—a signifier, in a sense, of its status as a conference within the public space.

Here, then, we see an indication of the way in which organizational mores were being shifted in the context of the war and nationalist development. Following the Conference, this new direction was confirmed by the extension of political mobilization in Kheda district to the point of a no-revenue campaign in order to press the case for remissions in the context of a poor harvest. The Kheda campaign was articulated by Gandhi as *satyagraha*. It is in this concept that we see the provision of a new framework for political action in the elite-led nationalist movement and through it, in effect, the development of a new discourse of organization.

Satyagraha as a Framework for Nationalist Strategy

It is clear from Gandhi's comments on the colonial predicament that, like other extremist nationalists, he perceived the issue of consent as central to India's subjugation: 'The English have not taken India,' he commented in *Hind Swaraj,* 'we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them.'[13] This manufacture of colonial consent was articulated by Gandhi as *maya,* a reference to the notion of the illusory nature of the world which underpins the monism of *Advaita Vedanta.* For the Mahatma, then, the *maya* of colonial power veiled the underlying truth that the state had no power save that which the people chose to allow it. Gandhi effectively diagnosed the predicament of India as an issue of hegemonic control.

The obverse of this colonial *maya* indicates the most seminal reinterpretation in Gandhian thought. This is the idea that Truth, *satya,* is God—it becomes the ultimate divine presence to which all actions in the world are related. In effect, Gandhi employed a mundane, everyday idea to conceptualize a Vedantic notion of the divine. Truth became the central concept of Gandhian Hinduism—a concept to which all could relate and, according to Gandhi, which everybody possessed, at least in potential.

If colonial power was *maya,* nationalism became politics directed towards the unveiling of *satya*. It had profound spiritual significance in the quest for truth, becoming almost a religious obligation. The means of fulfilling this obligation was *satyagraha*. This term has been understood as non-violent resistance, as truth-force and as soul-force, or simply as the search for truth. This variety of understandings would perhaps not have disappointed Gandhi, as his notion of truth as it existed in the world was always a relative truth: Absolute Truth, of course, being God and therefore unrealizable without the attainment of *moksha*. The components of the term are *satya*—truth—and *agraha*—which in Gujarati means insisting on something without becoming obstinate or uncompromising.[14] In itself, then, *satyagraha* expresses both an insistence on truth and a search for truth, with the implicit understanding that this search could entail a movement of one's original position to accommodate a newly revealed truth.

As well as acknowledging this philosophical meaning of *satyagraha,* it is important to look at the context in which it was developed as a political strategy. Gandhi first employed it in South Africa, where it conspicuously failed until it was backed up by the indentured labourers' strike of 1913.[15] After his return to India in 1915, Gandhi used the strategy selectively in a few local disputes, including Kheda, and progressively built in proven nationalist strategies such as economic, political, and institutional boycott and non-payment of taxes. It is in this sense that *satyagraha* provided the framework for the operation of these strategies; it was a framework that rooted the strategies within the parameters of Hindu tradition and continually directed the objective of resistance back onto the people themselves, as potential *satyagrahis*.

There is, then, a confluence of strategic and spiritual objectives implicit in the notion of *satyagraha,* which in some sense is contradictory. An indication of this is given by a speech delivered in Madras in March 1919 during the Rowlatt *Satyagraha*. Gandhi refers to the significance of broadening nationalist consciousness through *satyagraha,* stating that 'this movement is undoubtedly designed to prove to the Government that its authority is finally dependent upon the will of the people and not upon force of arms, especially when that will is expressed in terms of satyagraha'.[16] The final point illustrates a critical qualification to Gandhi's approach, in that it was the quality of *satyagraha,* rather than the actual mobilization of the people, which constituted the 'people's will'. He continues:

> It is not numbers so much as quality that we want. Let me, therefore, note down the qualities required of a satyagrahi. He must follow truth at any cost

and in all circumstances. He must make a continuous effort to love his opponents. He must be prepared to go through every form of suffering, whether imposed on him by the Government he is civilly resisting for the time being, or by those who may differ from him. This movement is thus a process of purification and penance.

There was, then, a very strong pedagogic element in the agenda of mobilization. 'The people' needed to be taught how to be political, in a manner reminiscent of their need to be taught how to protect cows during the 1893–4 movement. Gandhi's call for nationalist identification with the peasant was contingent upon the peasant's identification with a middle class sense of morality.

The key principles of *satya* and *ahimsa* lay at the heart of this morality. 'Satyagraha,' Gandhi stated in 1919, 'is like a banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil disobedience is one such branch, satya and ahimsa together make the parent trunk from which all innumerable branches shoot out.'[17] In formulating and testing what he referred to as the science of *ahimsa,* Gandhi characteristically invoked Hindu tradition whilst simultaneously transforming it within the logic of his political philosophy. Loosely translated as non-violence, the concept of *ahimsa* can be located in both Buddhist and Jain as well as Hindu tradition. In the latter, it is a concept associated with the relationship between *Brahman* and *Atman,* and the idea that the cosmos has a holistic existence. At the highest level, all creation is divine and may therefore be perceived as one. Because of this, there is an implicit tendency within Hinduism to propagate the notion of respect, if not goodwill, towards all living beings. Two central facets of modern Hinduism, vegetarianism and veneration of the cow, can be seen as directly related to this notion.[18]

This is not to say that killing or harming in itself is not evident in the Hindu tradition; a distinction is made between justified killing, required to maintain *dharma,* and unjustified or malicious killing—violence or *himsa.* This aspect is particularly elaborated in the epic and *puranic* tradition that informs *bhaktiyoga.* Here, the notion of *ahimsa* is both diffused and concentrated. Diffused in the sense that it underpins a general attitude of respect for other beings and concentrated in the sense that in terms of actual practice it is related to a withdrawal from the world, a theological methodology in the approach to *Brahman*—the preserve, as it were, of *pandits* and *sannyasis.*

Gandhi's project was to reverse this practical association between *ahimsa* and withdrawal from the world. He infused the concept with worldly emotions, relating it particularly to compassion and love. It

was, he said, a duty not only to assist those who had been harmed, but also to prevent that harm being done in the first place. 'Non-violence,' he stated, 'is not a cloistered virtue to be practised by the individual for his peace and final salvation, but a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity.' By invoking society, Gandhi opened up what was now the 'duty' of *ahimsa* to all Hindus: 'The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well.'[19] *Ahimsa,* then, was projected as a defining religious principle, a way of being religious for 'the common people', and it was through the adoption of this religious principle that India would be liberated.

This, needless to say, was an immensely ambitious vision of political development. Its trajectory is indicated by the link to morality which situates *ahimsa* and *satyagraha* as pathways to moral regeneration, the purification of the soul of the nation *(atmashuddhi).* Here Gandhi drew on entrenched notions of degeneracy as the defining feature of contemporary Hindu society, which have been linked to the colonial discourse of organization. As we have seen, it was this idea, in conjunction with the notion of the Golden Age, which underpinned a variety of middle class approaches to Hindu tradition.

In this context, Gandhi's philosophy may be perceived as an attempt to reproduce the concerns of middle class Hindus about their traditions at the dynamic level of popular practice. The means of effecting regeneration was through politics, because politics was an essential feature of *dharma* for all Hindus in *Kaliyuga:* 'No Indian who aspires to follow the way of true religion,' he says, 'can afford to remain aloof from politics.' And again, 'In the circumstances that obtain today, in following the path of religion they [the peasantry] must take into account the political conditions.'[20] Politics, then, was for Gandhi a means of mediating the objective of moral regeneration. At the same time, there is no doubt that the religious connotations of *satyagraha* and *ahimsa* were perceived by many nationalists as mediating nationalist objectives in a popular context.[21] From both angles mediation was the central issue. How to effect mass mobilization, mass regeneration, whilst maintaining the essentially middle class nature of the leading ideologies. The organization of the movement was again the critical factor.

Mediating Satyagraha: Nationalist Organization and the Volunteer Concept

The meshing of *ahimsa* with mass mobilization implied, as I have said, an enormously ambitious project, characterized by Gandhi as *atma-*

shuddhi, the purification of the nation's soul. This was presented as a process of self-assertion which would lead to independence not only from colonial control but from all the oppressive, immoral, *adharmic* aspects of society; the institution, as Gandhi would have it, of a new *Yugadharma.* It is clear from the development of *satyagraha* as a strategy that this process was to be mediated by a kind of vanguard, which would demonstrate, organize and lead the people in the process of *atmashuddhi.* The way in which this vanguard notion developed, from the localized *satyagraha* campaigns of 1917–18 to the termination of non-cooperation in 1922, is a fascinating indication of rapid shifts in the character of the movement and its attempt to build a counter-hegemonic strategy. Most importantly, by 1922 the idea of volunteers—variously perceived as workers and organizers, and increasingly *provocateurs,* restrainers, and controllers—had become entrenched as a basic unit in the nationalist conception of how to articulate politics.

Enthusiasts in the nationalist cause had of course always been a feature of the movement. From the rural campaigning of the Sarvajanik Sabha onwards, and particularly during the anti-Partition movement, nationalism had been driven by committed groups of volunteers.[22] In addition, this had been an integral feature of socio-religious reform organizations since at least the 1870s. What emerged in the immediate post-War years was, however, a somewhat different notion; a notion, as I will illustrate, which was central to the trajectory of Indian nationalism.

In issuing instructions to volunteers during the Kheda *Satyagraha* in 1918, Gandhi stated that 'the volunteers must remember that this is a holy war. We embarked upon it because, had we not, we would have failed in our dharma. And so all the rules which are essential for living a religious life must be observed here too'.[23]

Gandhi's volunteers—in this case those entrusted with the task of facilitating a withholding of land revenue by peasants—were to present themselves as archetypal *satyagrahis.* They were to observe 'all the rules' of a 'religious life', and in so doing they would inspire the peasants to do the same. The volunteers, then, had a critical role in the mediation of the idea of *satyagraha* in its full religious sense, because it was principally through their demeanour that this meaning of *satyagraha* would be transmitted to the people. In addition, *satyagraha* could be taught in the direct pedagogic sense noted above, and it was the volunteers who were also the source of this teaching. But it was the behaviour of volunteers that was crucial. Gandhi issued the statement quoted here as part of a fifteen point set of instructions, of which nine dealt explicitly with behaviour.[24] The most striking was that related to rudeness:

Rudeness has no place in satyagraha. Perfect courtesy must be shown even to those who may look upon as their enemies [*sic*] and the villagers must be taught to do the same. Rudeness may harm our cause and the struggle may be unduly prolonged. The volunteers should give the most serious attention to this matter and think out in their minds as many examples as possible of the advantages accruing from courtesy and the disadvantages resulting from rudeness and explain them to the people.

The incitement to withhold land revenue, then, was to be accompanied by a very middle class sense of propriety. It was important not to alienate authority through any overt demonstration of subalternity, which may have led to marginalization of the movement. As well as the religious significance of *satyagraha,* therefore, the volunteers were required to teach the peasants some manners.

This point was reiterated in the instructions to volunteers issued at the beginning of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* some eleven months later. To become a *satyagrahi* an individual had to sign the *Satyagraha* Pledge to resist the oppressive Rowlatt legislation. Volunteers were assigned the task of explaining the significance of the Pledge to every potential signatory and weeding out unsatisfactory or unprepared candidates. Part of the Pledge was in the form of a vow. The volunteers' instructions state:

Here the signatory affirms that he will refuse civilly to disobey certain laws. Volunteers must explain to the signatory the full significance of the word 'civilly'. For instance, to break moral laws is not civil disobedience. Nor is it civil disobedience to be discourteous to officials with whom one may have to deal, while disobeying laws.[25]

Civil disobedience, then, has a two-fold meaning. First, it is civil because it implies the withdrawal of cooperation with the state and its various institutions. In addition, however, it is civil in a behavioural sense—the opposite, in fact, of 'uncivil' disobedience. This approach may be seen as part of Gandhi's particular notion of *ahimsa. Satyagraha* relied for its success on the complete absence of *himsa,* and *himsa* included 'insulting, demeaning or humiliating others, diminishing their self-respect, speaking harsh judgements, anger and mental cruelty'.[26] This was to develop, as the power and popularity of *satyagraha* developed during the Non-cooperation Movement, into a frequently elaborated theory of the difference between social (especially caste-based) boycott as *himsa,* and political boycott as *ahimsa.*[27] The invocation of civility as a feature of *ahimsa,* however, was a more problematic nuance. Apart from anything else, the need for it appeared to contradict the important nationalist image of the peasantry as a diffident mass, subject to hegemonic control

and oppressed to the point of mute acceptance of authority. As elite nationalism progressed towards its objective of mass mobilization, this image was increasingly undermined by the eager self-assertion of subaltern groups.

Gandhi was to become increasingly aware of this self-assertion and its incompatibility with the kind of self-assertion he was trying to propagate through the dignified discipline of *satyagraha*. A speech at Idgah, Karachi, in July 1920, shortly before the launch of non-cooperation, began with a stern reproach:

> Before coming to the reasons for my visit to Karachi, I wish to refer to the scene at the railway station. We were to arrive this morning, but owing to an unfortunate railway accident and subsequent blocking of the line, we did not arrive until 9 p.m. The Karachi City station was overcrowded; many were in the sheds and many were whistling. What impression did I get from this? I realised your affection for me, but affection does not mean obstructing the platform and preventing me, the one you love, getting out. This is the result of lack of education and knowledge. What is the use of volunteers if they are unable to control crowds and do not obey their officers? Work cannot proceed under these circumstances.[28]

Gandhi referred to this kind of unruly behaviour as 'mobocracy', and was concerned that it would jeopardize the success of non-cooperation, as well as the general principle of *satyagraha*.[29] As a result, volunteers began to assume a new role. What is the use of volunteers, Gandhi asked at Idgah, if they could not control crowds?

Here, volunteers are projected with a function very different from that of the archetypal *satyagrahi*. They are useful because they can control crowds; they can, in other words, mediate the more unfortunate ramifications of a strategy based on mass mobilization. As Gandhi himself described them in 1920, they should be 'people's policemen'.[30] As this role became more significant, the importance of volunteers' discipline was enhanced:

> Much greater discipline, method and knowledge must be exacted from volunteers, and no chance comer should be accepted as a full-fledged volunteer. He only hinders rather than helping. Imagine the consequence of the introduction of one untrained soldier finding his way into an army of war. He can disorganise it in a second.[31]

The images of organization and disorganization refer us back strikingly to comments made in Chapter 2 about the relative projections of the state and society in colonial India. Volunteers had to be organized, and

their role was to transmit this organization to the 'mob'. As the Non-cooperation Movement progressed, it became clear that Gandhi remained dissatisfied with volunteers' ability to keep the movement on course. Nationalist agitations became increasingly marred by violence, culminating in the death of twenty-two police constables at Chauri Chaura in February 1922.

This act of violence caused Gandhi to suspend the Non-cooperation Movement. The Congress Working Committee resolutions confirming the stoppage began by condemning the 'inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura'. Resolution 8 dealt specifically with the failings of volunteers:

> Complaints have been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that in the formation of Volunteer Corps great laxity prevails in the selection and that insistence is not laid on the full use of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, and on full observance by Hindus of the rule as to the removal of untouchability, nor is care being taken to ensure that the candidates believe fully in the observance of non-violence in intent, word and deed, in terms of the Congress resolution, the Working Committee call upon all Congress organisations to revise their lists and remove from them the names of all such volunteers as do not strictly conform to the requirements of the pledge.[32]

The suggestion, then, was almost of a purge of the Volunteer Corps, in order to ensure that similar acts of violence were avoided. Interestingly, however, volunteers were not to be expelled because of lack of discipline or failure to control crowds, but rather because of failures in their observance of non-violence or other aspects of their role as ideal *satyagrahis*. This is consonant with the original Gandhian position that *satyagraha* was essentially directed at moral regeneration. Subaltern violence and the failure of volunteers to control it, therefore, was really a reflection of a breakdown of the process of *atmashuddhi*, as propagated by Gandhi himself and his ideal *satyagrahis*.[33] A few days after the Bardoli Resolutions, Gandhi was quoted in a newspaper as commenting: 'The incident at Chauri Chaura would have been impossible if the Congress and the Khilafat organisations were perfect. It is all a question of perfecting the Congress organisation.'[34] Perfecting the organization meant perfecting the conduct of volunteers. As the interface between the elite leadership and the mass of non-cooperators, volunteers now formed the most vital element in the implementation of nationalist strategy.

The importance of their role is illustrated by the very different view of volunteers adopted by the government at this time. Judith Brown records

the perception of volunteers first and foremost as an intimidatory force, 'Undisciplined mobs of rowdies who could be called out to enforce non-cooperation but over whom the real political leaders had virtually no control.'[35] She goes on to quote the Officiating Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal as noting in 1921 that volunteers 'are now distinctly of a lower class than at first, and are backed by the riffraff of the town, recruited on a payment of a daily wage to do whatever work is demanded of them'. Perhaps not surprisingly, the government's perceptions of nationalist volunteers were replete with images of disorder and disorganization—the opposite, as it were, of the state's own image of order and organization.

At the same time, these are precisely the images that Gandhi feared most: 'undisciplined mobs' over whom nationalist leaders had 'virtually no control'; 'riffraff' who joined the nationalist cause not because of any desire to bring about independence or to purify the soul of the nation, but rather in return for 'payment of a daily wage'. Every report of intimidation, every act of violence in which volunteers were implicated, brought the fear of this second scenario closer for the nationalist leadership. Having conceived of volunteers as a means of shepherding mass nationalism into the ambit of elite nationalist hegemony, the leadership could not divorce itself from the fear that they would in the end constitute an unruly and uncontrollable intrusion of subalternity into the discrete world of middle class politics. As Ranajit Guha has pointed out, this fear is indicative of the failure of the Gandhian leadership to 'assimilate the class interests of peasants and workers effectively into a bourgeois hegemony'.[36] The language of this failure is that of organization: it is a failure to 'control' and 'discipline' subalternity in the interests of the middle class leadership.

The position of volunteers in the national movement remained fraught with problems. The leadership was unable to decide whether it had created a people's police force, disciplining and containing the presence of subaltern elements, or a band of ideal *satyagrahis,* sent out to inspire the people with the example of their soul force. Even for Gandhi, the integration of these roles was problematic; for other nationalists it was compounded by confusion over the Mahatma's notion of *ahimsa*. Nehru illustrates this when commenting on resistance at the Cocanada Congress of 1923, to the setting up of the Congress volunteer organization, the Hindustani Seva Dal: 'We were surprised,' he says, 'to find out later how much opposition there was to the Seva Dal among leading Congressmen.... At the back of the mind of some was the notion that the idea of having trained and drilled volunteers was somehow

inconsistent with the Congress principle of non-violence.'[37] This indecision was a crucial dislocation in the development of both the strategy of mass mobilization and the organization to fulfil this strategy. In the mid-1920s, the previously dynamic nationalist strategy began to acquire a formulaic quality, divorced from its specific objectives. This quality allowed it to be appropriated in a variety of contexts, as a means of political expression; in short, it became a central feature in the development of a new discourse of organization.

Institutionalizing Nationalist Strategy as Political Expressions

So far in this book, it has been demonstrated that elite-led nationalist strategy developed in dynamic relation to a state-engendered political discourse. It has also been shown how some other political ideologies (i.e. non-Indian nationalist ideologies)—such as, for example, some forms of low caste assertion and of course the nascent ideology of Hindu nationalism—had been affected by this relationship; how, in fact, the nationalist–colonialist nexus set the parameters for the possibilities of political expression in the public space.[38] The nationalist interpretation of colonial power as hegemonic, and the development of a strategy to counter this perceived hegemony, were the driving force behind the dynamism of this relationship. The state was forced time and again to shift its strategy in order to combat more effectively the potential of nationalist counter-hegemony. The Non-cooperation Movement may be seen as the culmination of this dynamic relationship as the overwhelmingly dominant force in Indian politics. After 1922, a whole host of ideologies and organizations began to impinge on the arena of politics in the public space. Indian nationalists could no longer speak for 'the people' in the same way. Other forces were able to claim a legitimate representative position in the public space.[39] As I have suggested above, this shift may be attributed to the inability of the middle class leadership of the Congress to follow the logic of its strategy and accommodate all the conflicting interests of those to whom it appealed for support; to become, in Guha's words, a 'supra-class representative of the nation.'[40] The failure of the Congress to assume this position is indicated by the increasing importance of discipline as a feature of mass mobilization.

This is not to say, however, that the strategy of counter-hegemony as employed by the Gandhian Congress was not significant, nor that it did not have lasting impact on the structure of Indian politics. On the contrary, key elements of the strategy as developed by Gandhi—

satyagraha and the use of volunteer corps—became institutionalized as central features in a new discourse of organization, a new way of 'being political', liberated from the nationalist–colonialist nexus. The state, despite its distaste for both volunteers and the idea of *satyagraha,* was nevertheless forced to accommodate them as recognizable, legitimate features of a new political landscape.

In the aftermath of the Non-cooperation Movement several small-scale yet sustained *satyagraha* campaigns were launched. An example is provided by the National Flag *Satyagraha* in Nagpur.[41] This action developed out of a comparatively minor incident, when a procession carrying the Congress flag to mark the end of National Week in April 1923 was refused entry beyond the Civil Lines, ostensibly out of respect for the national sensibilities of the British residents of Nagpur.[42] The stand-off developed into a formal *satyagraha* campaign from 1 May onwards, with *satyagrahis* courting arrest by attempting to carry the flag into the Civil Lines area. Although the agenda of the campaign was obviously nationalist, it is clear that it was a local mobilization which only latterly received Congress support. The *Pranavir,* a Hindi bi-weekly published in Nagpur which supported the *satyagraha* throughout, called on nationalist figures to support the campaign some two weeks after it was launched:

> The leaders should come forward and offer themselves for arrest as soon as their organising work is finished with a view to meeting the objection of the detractors of the movement that the leaders are keeping themselves in the background while sending small boys and common people to the front. [The *Pranavir*] deplores the attitude of the Maharashtriyan [*sic*] leaders who...refused to give any active help to the movement....[43]

Wider support did eventually emerge, with the Gujarat Provincial Congress sending substantial numbers of volunteers.[44] In August, Vallabhbhai Patel negotiated a somewhat muted settlement whereby a limited flag procession was allowed to pass through the Civil Lines along a prescribed route with heavy police escort.[45]

The significance of the Flag *Satyagraha* in our context is not so much its success or failure, but rather the way in which it arose and the fact that it was sustained amid considerable opposition. Immediately prior to the launch of the campaign, in March 1923, a similar incident at Jubbulpur had set in motion a half-hearted *satyagraha* which was scuttled by the opposition of the All-India Congress Committee.[46] The Nagpur campaign was launched despite negative comment in much of the local

press[47] and the lacklustre backing of the national Congress. My point is that it was nevertheless launched and sustained because *satyagraha* had, in the wake of non-cooperation, become an accepted form of political expression in localized contexts. The Nagpur nationalists chose this form of expression as appropriate to their needs, where twenty or even ten years previously they may have opted for a meeting of 'representatives of the people of Nagpur' and a petition to the local government.[48]

The Flag *Satyagraha* demonstrates the way in which the Gandhian strategy had been adapted and extended in the context of localized nationalist politics. There is, however, a further, less formal way in which the strategy interceded in forms of politics during this period. Another incident in Nagpur in 1923 illustrates this point. In the run up to the Ganapati festival in September, tension mounted in Nagpur over the proposed route of the immersion procession. This route was to take the processionists past a newly constructed gate to the Masjid in the Ganesh Peth locality. Representatives of the Masjid applied to the District Magistrate to prevent the procession passing the gate and, in the context of rising tension, the Magistrate granted an injunction.[49]

Although initially the injunction was complied with, tension continued and in October Hindus began taking processions out in defiance of the injunction. This defiance was expressed in Gandhian terms. The *Khabar,* a recently launched Marathi daily published in Nagpur, stated that 'this is perhaps the fittest occasion for the Hindus to have their long standing right of taking [out] religious processions established by means of satyagraha'. Similarly, the established Nagpur Marathi weekly, the *Maharashtra,* suggested that 'it is a noble endeavour of the Hindus to awaken a feeling of broadmindedness in their Muslim brethren by self-suffering and courting prison'.[50] K.B. Hedgewar's biographers take up the story:

> In October the Bhajan groups had to pass through the same route. Muslims objected to this also. But ignoring their protests, the Bhajan groups went through the same route for two or three days. But later on the police sided with the Muslims and started obstructing the Bhajan processions. Dr. Hedgewar and other Hindu leaders went from house to house and mobilised a large number of people to join the Bhajan. On 8th November, 41 prominent leaders including Dr. Hedgewar, Dr. Paranjpe, Dr. Cholkar and others took part in the Satyagraha. Thousands of people gathered. On 11 December, Raja Lakshmanrao Bhonsle also joined the movement. Over forty thousand people had congregated to witness this rare sight of Hindu resurgence.[51]

Again the pattern is seen of small groups systematically defying a government order in the name of *satyagraha,* watched by larger groups of interested by-standers.[52] Throughout November defiance of the injunction continued and many middle class people took part. B.S. Moonje noted that 'shastris, pandits, doctors, pleaders, merchants, all offered themselves for arrest and were actually arrested'.[53] The *Pranavir* reported that a total of 500 Hindus were arrested during this month.[54]

The issue of music before mosques, of course, is one of the most persistent themes of communal tension during the 1920s, and I will return to this particular example presently.[55] What is to be noted here is the references to the Gandhian strategy, with the attendant implication of the presence of a body of volunteers ready to go to prison in support of the cause. Although obviously not formalized by applications for recognition from the Congress machinery, the strategy and the language of *satyagraha* were again used in a local context as a recognized form of political expression. The two simple prerequisites were a body of willing volunteers and a law or ordinance to break.

Here, a similarity emerges between the Flag *Satyagraha* and the Ganesh Peth incident, which illustrates the adaptation of the Gandhian strategy as an independent means of political expression. Gandhi's campaigns up to this point had all been meticulously preplanned as a means of countering an identified injustice perpetrated by the state—a means, as it were, of advancing the cause of truth. Both the 'campaigns' discussed here, however, were designed to defy measures taken by authorities specifically to control the original campaigners. The Flag *Satyagraha* was instigated in response to a local injunction preventing the carrying of the flag through certain areas in the first place. Similarly, *satyagraha* at Ganesh Peth was invoked in response to a District Magistrate order preventing a procession passing the Masjid. It is the potential *satyagrahis* who set the agenda in both cases—creating the situation by pushing at the limits of the law in a general sense, then courting arrest over a 'law' created specifically to control this push. The Nagpur activists had taken advantage of a subtle change in the position of the law in relation to the public space, a change that occurred as a result of the institution of Gandhian *satyagraha* as mainstream nationalist strategy. For the first time, breaking the law was a legitimate way of being political. As an act of politics, in other words, it had a recognizable position within the public space. By invoking *satyagraha,* activists were now able simultaneously to assert new 'rights' whilst remaining within the public space. This was a critical slipping of state control, but—equally critical—it

was not a slip in favour of the elite-led nationalist movement, but rather of any form of politics that engaged with the public space.

Satyagraha in this sense assumes a new, legitimizing quality. The *Hitavada,* an English weekly published in Nagpur which had consistently opposed the Flag *Satyagraha,* asked in May: 'Supposing the honour of the flag is vindicated, what then? Will India be any nearer the goal of *swaraj?*'[56] The *Pranavir* answers, acknowledging the apparent meaninglessness of the Flag *Satyagraha* ('such a step does not advance the cause of the country even by an inch'), but nevertheless supports it because 'the arrest of innocent men produces a great effect on the minds of other people who begin to look upon the Government with contempt'.[57] Despite the fact that the whole nature of the campaign was to court arrest by breaking the law, 'innocence' was guaranteed by association with *satyagraha.* It is because of this association that the flag ordinance becomes a symbol of colonial injustice and a reason for holding the government in contempt.

Of course, Gandhi's own practice of *satyagraha* had symbolic value. In a sense, all acts of *satyagraha* against the state were symbolic. But the examples from Nagpur show a development of this function, because their meaning is assigned not by their opposition to extant oppression, but rather by their own agency. *Satyagraha* here becomes less a search for truth and more a formulaic strategy for the practice of politics. In effect, it becomes the key element in the development of a new discourse of organization, a discourse which was critically decentred, in the sense that it was no longer focused on the nationalist–colonialist nexus of political expression. The implications of this in terms of the organization of Hindu nationalism will be examined in the next chapter. Prior to this it is necessary to examine a further development of political discourse during this period.

Situating 'Others': Hindu Identity and Communal Consciousness in the Early 1920s

An unprecedented feature of the Non-cooperation Movement had been Congress alliance with the All-India Khilafat Committee (AIKC) and the consequent incorporation of its objectives into the movement. Indeed, it was from the AIKC that the call for non-cooperation first came, at the Delhi *Khilafat* Conference in November 1919. *Khilafat* was, of course, an issue primarily of Muslim concern; it should not be overlooked, however, that it also had a strong element of anti-European solidarity, in that it opposed the Allied destruction of the Turkish Empire

in the wake of the First World War. As a Congress Enquiry later commented:

> In 1920 and 1921 the Congress Committees were full of Musalmans and Hindu Chairmen and Secretaries of Khilafat Committees could be counted by the score. The Hindus began to realise how closely was the problem of the Middle East linked with the fate of India.... It was a glorious time in the history of Indian nationalism.[58]

The Turkish Sultan had a disputed claim to the *Khilafate*—the position of spiritual protector of Islam—and the post-War settlement effectively did away with his ability to fulfil this role. There are two senses in which the adoption of this issue extended the parameters of nationalist politics in India. First, it was an international issue, where the national movement had previously been steadfastly internal. Second, of course, it was an issue self-consciously related to religious faith, when again the concerns of the national movement had previously been operationally secular, even when they were presented as religious imperatives. This religious issue, then, lay at the heart of a movement which was articulated by Gandhi as the first national *satyagraha*—i.e. a movement conducted on the basis of the 'religion' of *ahimsa*.

Religion, then, was brought to right the foreground of nationalist politics. Not only did it underpin one of the principal objectives of the movement; it also permeated the very structure of that agitation. Significantly, when he suspended the movement in 1922, Gandhi did so precisely because the religion of *ahimsa* had been transgressed. For the AIKC, this caused the collapse of the alliance with the Congress and the realignment of *Khilafat* as an exclusively Muslim issue. The *Khilafat* cause was soon completely undermined when the new Turkish National Assembly first separated the office of Caliph from the government of the Turkish state in November 1922 and then abolished the Caliphate altogether in March 1924.[59] The leadership vacuum created by the collapse of the AIKC was quickly filled by the Muslim League, which in 1924 held its annual conference separate from Congress for the first time since 1918.

Both during and after this course of events, there was an unprecedented wave of communal rioting across British India.[60] It is this succession of riots which established violent communalism as a regular feature of Indian politics. Undoubtedly, a sense of identity was engendered amongst Hindus as a result of this process of communalization; as it was, of course, amongst Indian Muslims. Certain 'Others' emerged as a prominent feature of this Hindu identity.[61] This had an inevitable impact on

the ideology of Hindu organization, reacting to and developing in the context of this heightened tension.

'Stigmatizing and Emulating Threatening Others'

Christophe Jaffrelot has used two expressions to describe the development of Hindu nationalist ideology. In earlier work he has expressed the development as 'strategic syncretism': 'syncretic because it has been culled from cultural values of groups perceived as being antagonistic to the Hindu community and strategic because it underlies an ideology that seeks to dominate the 'others' in terms of prestige as well as on a concrete socio-political plane.'[62] In his book, however, he has revised his approach, citing ideological development as a strategy of 'stigmatisation and emulation': 'a process of cultural reorganisation' which 'redefined Hindu nationalist identity in opposition to... "threatening Others" while—under the pretext of drawing inspiration from a so-called Vedic "Golden Age"—assimilating those cultural features of the Others which were regarded as prestigious and efficacious in order to regain self-esteem and resist the Others more effectively'.[63]

The shift in terminology is politically appropriate. Jaffrelot eschews syncretism as a facet of Hindu nationalist ideology because the implication of some kind of cultural synthesis is seen as inappropriate in this blatantly exclusivist context. The agenda of cultural synthesis is rather attributed to movements such as the Brahmo Samaj—a less threatening accommodation of the Other. Hindu nationalism, however, with its roots apparently in the aggressive exclusivism of the Arya Samaj, is perceived as emulating facets of another culture in order to resist a perceived threat from that culture. There is, in a sense, a double instrumentality in this model. First, certain proponents of the other culture present a threatening image of that culture; second, Hindu elites appropriate aspects of the threatening image in order to rebuff it.

Jaffrelot describes this process as a cycle. In the late nineteenth century there was the cycle of Arya-led stigmatization and emulation, with the colonial state and Christian missions constituting the threatening Other. This cycle led to the development of 'Arya nationalism', or 'proto-Hindu nationalism'. A second cycle occurred, Jaffrelot states, in the early 1920s, and this led to the development of Hindu nationalism and the idea of *sangathan*. The threatening Other in this case was a particular projection of Muslim culture—as Jaffrelot puts it, 'a mobilisation on the part of the Muslims'.[64] This was the *Khilafat* movement. The Muslim mobilization, he continues, 'degenerated in some instances into anti-Hindu riots', an example being the Moplah or Mappila rebellion of 1921. The internal

unity displayed by Muslims during this period forms the basis—through emulation—for the ideological development of *sangathan.*

Surprisingly, then, it is 'the Muslims' who bear a fair brunt of the responsibility for the emergence of Hindu nationalism in Jaffrelot's model. It is their mobilization over *Khilafat,* and its degeneration into anti-Hindu riots, which constitute the threatening Other responsible for the cycle of stigmatization and emulation amongst Hindu elites which produced the *sangathan* movement. This conclusion, I would say, illustrates the limitations of the 'stigmatize and emulate' model. In the first instance, it cannot accommodate the idea of *Khilafat* as an Indian nationalist concern. As stated above, the collaboration between the All-India Khilafat Committee and the Congress is indicative of a composite nationalism and fairly widespread feeling of cooperation during this period which cannot be dismissed.[65] Second, some scholarly work has illustrated that the anti-Hindu character of the Moplah rebellion was a secondary feature, emerging only in the context of the institution of oppressive martial law, and in many ways attributable to this oppression.[66] Third and most importantly, Jaffrelot himself has noted that 'the cohesion attributed to the Muslim community was grossly exaggerated.' The cycle of emulation is therefore related to stereotypes of Islamic unity which had 'taken shape between about 1890 and 1910'.[67] This introduces a new, highly ideological element into the cycle: the idea of Hindu nationalist *sangathan* built not so much on the emulation of threatening Islam symbolized by *Khilafat,* as on pre-formulated stereotypes of Muslim cohesion. Later, in relation to RSS *sangathan,* Jaffrelot takes a different line, splitting the process of stigmatization and emulation between the two overarching images of the British and the Muslims. 'From the Hindu nationalist point of view,' he says, 'Muslims fulfilled the role of "threatening Others" while the British colonialists represented the Other to be emulated.'[68] In this equation the model is particularly untenable, as it contradicts the fundamental idea that the ideology is built precisely by appropriating what it sees as threatening.

The problems associated with the stigmatize and emulate model derive from the initially limited idea of ideology as a specifically appropriated facet of culture, an idea developed, as noted in Chapter 1, from the work of Clifford Geertz. Here, colonial elites are presented as constructing ideologies as an instrumentalist project, turning to and picking and choosing aspects of culture (their own and others') in support of their own class-based bids for power. I argued that this objectification of culture, and the concomitant idea of instrumentalist manipulation, are too isolated from the complexities of ideological development in colonial

society, even in the comparatively limited arena of the colonial public space. This is demonstrated by the model of stigmatization and emulation. Jaffrelot overlooks the historical development of the ideology of Hindu nationalism over a more enduring period. By acknowledging the historical independence of ideologies, and their position as a means through which culture is defined (i.e. in terms of Hall's 'mental frameworks'), this complex development may be accommodated.

This is a point, of course, which lies at the very heart of this book. What it underlines here is the whole problem of 'Others'. Where did they stand in relation to this ideological development; what was their role in the construction of a pan-Hindu identity; how and why were particular images projected by Hindu elites? I want to argue that the particular projection of these images—the way in which they were presented as 'Others'—was dependent on the growing influence of the ideology of Hindu organization. It is this ideology which projects particular characteristics on to its Others, rather than the objective existence of these characteristics being picked up and extended by particular groups or individuals bent on the self-interested development of a particular ideology. This may be related precisely to the definition of ideologies as constituting 'mental frameworks' through which culture, and cultures, are defined.

Representing The Moplah Rebellion

Examining press comment on the rise of communal tension in various parts of India during the mid-1920s, one particular incident emerges as seminal, a defining symbol of a self-conscious Hindu predicament. This is the Moplah rebellion of 1921, which occurred in Malabar, far from the focal points of communal tension in the north. The Moplahs were a community of Muslim leaseholders and cultivators with a history of revolt against the oppression of local (Hindu) landlords. In 1921 the Moplahs led a rebellion on a massive scale in Malabar, which was brutally suppressed by the British. The whole course of events was scrutinized at length in the press across British India; it was, then, very much an event within the public space. This is evidenced by extensive comment in the Central Provinces press, a press which in 1921 was relatively unaffected by communal tension because of the absence of communal incidents there. The reason for the prominence of the Moplah rebellion even in this press environment was its association with the idea of conversion (I am deliberately omitting the prefix 'forced' which is so closely linked to the Moplah rebellion)—an idea which is immediately associated with key themes of Hindu organization.

The Moplah rebellion of 1921 has been presented in a variety of forms.[69] Not surprisingly, the British administration in Malabar cast it as the work of a handful of Muslim 'fanatics', whipped into a frenzy by *Khilafat* agitators, who then became the perpetrators of mass forced conversions of local Hindus.[70] This view has been progressively broken down in historical accounts, presenting the rebellion more as a peasant-based and peasant-led outbreak of violent resistance against British rule and landowners' oppression, which assumed a communal form in the wake of massive repression.[71] Sarkar records that the first case of forcible conversion occurred on 10 September 1921, the rebellion having been sparked by a police raid on Tirurangadi mosque on 20 August. Thursby's coverage of the western and northern press, however, shows that *reports* of forced conversion were being aired prior to this date and that the numbers involved varied quite widely.[72] As this suggests, accuracy was never a particularly important feature of reporting in relation to the rebellion. In the first instance, events were occurring at such a vast distance, both geographically and politically, from the normal ambit of northern and western reportage. In addition, the class character of the rebellion encouraged a rather ambiguous attitude from middle class Indians, as a result of which religious fanaticism was sometimes seen as a more palatable motivation for the unrest.[73]

In contrast to some of the northern and western press, however, the whole tenor of reporting in the Central Provinces at the time of the rebellion was to reject the idea of forced conversion as significant. 'We put absolutely no credence,' states the *Young Patriot* on 12 September, 'in the stories of forced conversion of the Hindus by the Moplahs. They all seem to be concocted to deal a death blow to Hindu-Muslim entente.'[74] As it became clear that some forced conversions had taken place, newspapers continued to play down its significance. The *Samaj-sewak* of Nagpur comments towards the end of September:

> The Moplah riots will serve as a proof of the extent to which the Government is bent upon thwarting the Non-cooperation Movement. The unfortunate incident of the forcible conversion of a few Hindus to Islam was made use of by the Government to cause a split between the two communities by giving exaggerated accounts of some conversion.[75]

In addition, reports began to isolate the characteristics of Moplahs, regarding them as a somewhat uncivilized community unrepresentative of Indian Islam.[76]

Despite this scepticism as to the extent and significance of forced conversion, however, many Central Provinces newspapers nevertheless

responded with enthusiasm to attempts to effect reconversions in Malabar. Even though the Arya Samaj was instrumental in these attempts, furthermore, reconversion was not generally an issue associated with a reforming approach to Hinduism. It was, rather, perceived as a modern solution to a modern problem. The *Nagpur Samachar* noted that the 'orthodox section' of local Brahmans supported reconversion. The *Lokmatt* reported that a 'Commission' had been appointed 'by the Nagpur public' to enquire into the forced conversions and their reversal. This 'Commission', which included the prominent Nagpur Tilakite and future Hindu Mahasabha president B.S. Moonje, was supported by the *Shankaracharya* of Karweer Pith, Dr Kurtkoti, who had 'broken off with the blind traditions of the hoary past and kept abreast of the times. Such an attitude is bound to lead to a resuscitation of the Hindu religion'.[77] The final remark indicates the way in which the Moplah conversions were being appropriated as a feature of the Hindu ideology of organization. Here, it appeared, was an opportunity to put the idea of Hindu organization into practice in an entirely non-threatening manner. Not only were the lost Hindus of Malabar a seemingly soft target because they had been forced into Islam and their caste could be easily identified, they were also part of a distant world, viewed from the north at arms length as a kind of 'laboratory' for the practice of Hindu organization.

The Nagpur 'Commission' on the Malabar conversions led to the production of a report, some two years later, written by Dr Moonje.[78] In the context of the rising tensions of summer 1923, this report projects the aspirations of organized Hinduism on to Islam:

> The Hindus are divided into so many water tight compartments, each having a social culture and life of its own, that there is hardly any association between them in the wider field of social activities and amenities of the community as a whole...; so that if one section happens to come into conflict with the Mahomedans, the other sections hardly ever consider it worth their while to come to its help.... The Mahomedans, on the other hand, form one organic community, religiously well-organised and disciplined so that any injury done to any part of the community anywhere is felt as keenly all through out.[79]

The comparative indifference with which the northern Muslim communities viewed the vicious suppression of the Moplah rebellion provides us with a counterpoint to Moonje's argument here.[80] But this is not the point of Moonje's discourse; the threat he is highlighting is not so much the organic unity of Muslims as the chronic disunity of Hindus. The image of Islamic unity is set up as a paradigmatic Other, incorporating

precisely those characteristics which have been shown to have developed as ideals in the ideology of Hindu organization. Conversion stands as an indication of the failure of Hinduism to attain these ideals. Not only forced conversion, but any conversion exists as a marker of the continued inability of Hindus to become organized. This point is illustrated by comment in the *Karmavir* early in 1923:

> We cannot shut our eyes to the deplorable condition of the untouchables who for want of sympathy from their brethren are fast becoming converts to Christianity or Islam and are thus depleting the strength of the society. We have been rendered incapable of defending ourselves and our rights. The atrocities perpetrated by the Moslems on the Hindu population at Multan and in Malabar are not yet effaced from our memory.[81]

The *Karmavir* blends two apparently contradictory images: on the one hand, the image of untouchables voluntarily converting because of the evident oppressions of Hinduism; on the other, the image of Malabar (as well as that of Multan, where a riot had occurred in September 1922) where the 'atrocity perpetrated' was forced conversion of Hindus. The reason the paper gives for this atrocity was the oppression and disunity of Hinduism, as characterized by voluntary conversion. Muslim agency is almost entirely incidental in this explanation.

Malabar emerges, then, as a symbol of the 'loss of strength' of Hindu society, caused by lack of unity. What this suggests is that rather than stigmatizing and emulating the 'other culture' of Indian Islam, the ideology of Hindu organization was primarily in dialogue with itself, addressing its own historically defined preoccupations.

Music before Mosques as Hindu Self-Assertion

This point is reiterated through an examination of the nature of developing tension during the 1920s over the playing of music in Hindu processions which passed mosques, particularly during prayer times *(namaz)*. This kind of tension was not a new phenomenon in the twenties. It had emerged sporadically as a public order problem in various areas from the late nineteenth century onwards. In Nagpur in 1903–4, for example, there was protracted tension over this issue, which was settled by the ruling of the Divisional Commissioner.[82] As another Divisional Commissioner of the Central Provinces stated in 1914:

> By far the most common form of dispute [between Hindus and Muslims] is regarding the playing of music when passing places of worship, and when friction arises regarding that matter it is almost always due to some temporary ill-feeling which takes advantage of the very delicate nature of the music question to stir

up strife. Processional music must have been played for centuries without dispute so long as the obvious restraints dictated by good feeling were observed. But when good feeling is at an end, there is a demand for freedom from all restraint on the one side and for prohibition or excessive restraint on the other that calls for intervention by the authorities who consult the leaders on both sides as to what is fair and in accordance with custom.[83]

Unlike cow protection, the issue of music before mosques never developed the characteristics of a movement. As the Commissioner comments, it appeared rather as an outlet for underlying tension. Its presence in the public space was ensured not through the setting up of organizations, but rather through the 'intervention of authorities' and the 'consultation of leaders', as well as the reporting of incidents in the press. It represents a sporadic assertion of 'rights': either of the Hindu 'right' to take out processions unhampered on public highways, or of the Muslim 'right' to offer *namaz* in an appropriate environment. As the dispute in Nagpur in 1903–4 unfolded, for example, the police ruling preventing the playing of music before mosques was described by the Poona weekly, the *Mahratta,* as a denial not of 'pleasure or privilege', but of 'rights immemoriably enjoyed by the whole Hindu community'.[84] It is important to note that these assertions were projected as the existing rights of the respective communities; the job of authority was to adjudicate whose rights were more genuine, more established.[85]

As this suggests, the articulation of disputes over this issue returns us directly to Victoria's Proclamation and the position of 'religious communities' in relation to the state. Representation, of course, was a central feature of this quasi-constitutional relationship. The occurrence of disputes, as the Commissioner suggests, would lead naturally to the consultation of community leaders—individuals recognized by local authority as representing the interests and views of local Hindus or Muslims. This was, however, always a localized, unformalized pattern, reflecting the centrality of symbolic representation in the colonial discourse of organization. Interestingly, the above comments are made in the context of a resolution moved in the Imperial Legislative Council to form permanent 'Conciliation Boards' consisting of local representatives, in an effort to forestall the build up of tension. This formalization was unanimously rejected by Central Provinces District Commissioners whose opinions were solicited, one remarking: 'There is no system of election or nomination in this country, and none could be devised, whereby the representatives of Hindus and Muhammedans would be elected by a unanimous vote of their people and we have no guarantee that the people would with one consent follow the leaders approved.'[86]

Formalization was meaningless, then, without proper structures of representation, and these structures were inappropriate to Indian conditions ('no system of election or nomination...could be devised'). The Central Provinces government therefore advised the Government of India that existing arrangements, recognizing local leaders through the knowledge and judgement of the state's local representative, were sufficient.[87]

This arrangement was sustainable whilst the state retained a measure of control of the public space. As we have seen, however, the post-War years witnessed a shift in the balance of power over the public space, indicated by the emergence of a new discourse of organization. In this context, music before mosques developed into a means of asserting new 'rights' in the public space. The 1923–4 Ganesh Peth incident and its aftermath in Nagpur again provide us with an example of how this strategy was employed as a means of consolidating Hindu identity. In particular, it illustrates how music before mosques was utilized as a practical means of countering the 'loss of strength' of Hindu society which had been symbolized by the Moplah conversions. As one newspaper commented in relation to the dispute in October 1923: 'It is high time the Hindus realised the value of organisation in their society, which alone will save them from the persecution of people of other religious persuasions.'[88] And again in November:

> The fact is that ever since the Hindu society became dead to its sense of honour and self-respect, any community can insult it with impunity... . If the Hindus at all want to survive such humiliations, they ought, without delay, to organise themselves into a compact whole and be prepared to act in the world more manfully than they have hitherto done.[89]

The fact that the dispute was originally cast as a kind of Hindu *satyagraha* increased the emphasis on organization during this period. Courting arrest in a systematic fashion was symbolic of the wider concerted effort of Hindus to resist 'humiliation'. The Ganesh Peth dispute dragged on into 1924 and was eventually settled, after rioting in the summer, through the arbitration of Motilal Nehru and Maulana Azad.[90] The terms of the settlement were that five specified processions were permitted to pass mosques with music at all times, whilst others were required to stop music during *namaz*.[91] Note that the dispute was settled not through government, but through nationalist intervention.

In the aftermath of Ganesh Peth, playing music before mosques began to assume the position of a display of Hindu strength in unity. A year later, an Urdu weekly published in Nagpur, the *Al Haq,* commented

that 'this year the dindi processions, attended by thousands of Dr Munje's followers armed with lathis, passed peacefully before the Nagpur mosques, where their pace suddenly slackened to give them full opportunity to play the music with the utmost noise'.[92] The reference to 'Munje's followers' is an indication of the Doctor's central position in these displays. D.R. Goyal states that Moonje was the leader of the Ganesh Peth agitation, whilst Dr Hedgewar, who was to become leader of the RSS, 'acted as the stormtrooper'.[93] Together they subsequently formed a kind of local 'service' to Hindus taking out processions. In 1927, for example, Moonje records in his diary that he was consulted by a worried father intending to take out a marriage procession which would have to pass a city mosque. Moonje writes that he 'told him to consult Dr Hedgewar but...warned him not to stop music'.[94] Several other sources corroborate this view of Hedgewar as a source of protection for Nagpur's Hindu processionists.[95]

The tone of these remarks suggests the development of music before mosques away from the issue of disputed religious 'rights', in the sense denoted by the Proclamation and towards the idea of a symbolic act of Hindu assertion, embellished by the defiance of the 'Other' of Muslim organization. Although it would be unhistorical to completely efface Muslim agency in these disputes, it is clear that the small Muslim community in Nagpur was becoming increasingly terrorized through this kind of aggressive Hindu self-assertion. In the immediate aftermath of the 1927 riot in Nagpur (see Chapter 6), the normally mildly pro-Hindu *Hitavada* comments:

> It is no use disguising the fact that the Mahommedans in Nagpur have become very nervous and terror-stricken.... Whatever views one might hold about the causes of the trouble, the fact remains that many Mahommedan families have left Nagpur and that most of the Mahommedan residents in the city are afraid to leave their homes and move freely in the localities where there is a preponderance of the Hindu element.[96]

In this context, the issue of music before mosques may be seen as further indication of the tendency of the ideology of Hindu organization to construct a dialogue with itself, employing the 'Other' of Muslim aggressiveness as a rationalizing or legitimizing agent. The objective existence of a 'threatening Other' is of minimal importance here.

Hindu Organization and Low Caste Mobilization

The development of ideologies and movements based on caste—far more than those based on Islam—constituted a specific threat to the ideology

of Hindu organization during this period. It has been noted previously that Phule's work challenged the claims of high-caste-dominated organizations to represent a Hindu 'community' that included low castes and untouchables. Mobilization in the 1920s extended this work. The historical distinction which Phule made between the original inhabitants of India and Aryan 'invaders' was to become a central feature of non-Brahman identity. This kind of ideology undermined the image of Hinduism as the religion of the soil, of *Bharat Mata,* and questioned the boundaries of Hinduism as stipulated by the all-embracing ideology of Hindu organization.

In Nagpur low caste mobilization was driven by leaders from the Mahar caste. This was an untouchable caste which formed about one-sixth of the population of Nagpur district, and had by the turn of the century demonstrated significant tendencies towards independent organization.[97] Mahars also formed some 40 per cent of workers in Nagpur's powerful textile industry.[98] As early as 1909, the Mahar leader Kisan Faguji Bansode was distinguishing low castes from Hindus by reference to the Aryan conquest, proclaiming:

> At that time we were your conquest, you treated us even worse than slaves and subjected us to any torture you wanted. But now we are no longer your subjects, we have no service relationship with you, we are not your slaves or serfs.... We have had enough of the harassment and torture of the Hindus.[99]

Again following the example of Phule, Mahar leaders were particularly critical of what were perceived as high caste attempts to alleviate the condition of low castes. Thus in 1923 the Nagpur weekly *Bahishkrit Bharat,* published by the Mahar Ganesh Akaji Gawai, commented on a recent meeting of the Maharashtra Hindu Dharma Parishad in Yeotmal. Here, a resolution was passed stating that untouchability should not be observed in public spaces 'barring temples, sacred places and public tanks or wells.' The *Bahishkrit Bharat* describes this as a 'shameless resolution [which] only adds insult to the injury of the depressed classes'. 'Under the name of the defence of Hindu religion,' the editorial continues, 'attempts are made to perpetuate the religious and social predominance of the priestly class over the non-Brahman and depressed classes.'[100]

The final comment here indicates a recognition of the relationship between low caste 'uplift' and high caste anxiety over the welfare of Hinduism in the modern world. The ideology of low caste mobilization specifically counters the logic of this relationship, which by mid-1923 was emerging as central to the notion of Hindu *sangathan.* Because of this, low caste mobilization became increasingly the most threatening

'Other' for the ideology of Hindu organization. This is illustrated by the way in which low caste mobilization was perceived by the high caste press, including the nationalist press. The 1925 Central Provinces and Berar Non-Brahman Conference at Wardha was described by the *Hitavada* as a 'separatist movement'.[101] The *Maharashtra* apparently confirmed the *Hitavada's* suspicions by noting disapprovingly the Conference's decision to omit 'Hindu' from its title, and by describing the 'wild and vulgar attacks on Brahmins' during proceedings.[102] Reports such as these are replete with a sense of horror at the apparently uncontrollable nature of low caste mobilization, its 'wildness' and 'vulgarity'. This sense is encapsulated by the persistent reference to the movement as a kind of disease. The Wardha Conference was described by other papers at the time as evidence of the 'anti-Brahmin infection' and the 'contagion of anti-Brahmin feeling'.[103] Similarly, B.S. Moonje, commenting on a Dr Powar of Mohad in his personal diary in 1926, is thankful that he was not 'affected by the virus of the non-Brahmin controversy'.[104] This persistent representation of low caste consciousness as a virus or disease is indicative of its status in the ideology of Hindu organization. It simply could not be located within the parameters of recognizable political discourse. The only way of comprehending it, rather, was by presenting it as an unfortunate natural disorder.

This is a rather drastic representation, but it does indicate an attitude of incomprehension that runs through virtually all high caste attempts to effect amelioration of the low caste predicament through 'uplift'—such a characteristic feature, as we have seen, of the horizontal approach to Hindu organization. This is illustrated by an examination of Gandhi's heartfelt attempts to eradicate untouchability. It is possible, I would say, to situate Gandhi as an advocate of horizontal organization in this context because of his attitude towards caste.

Prior to 1925, Gandhi supported the idea of caste in its contemporary form. He produced a whole series of arguments in its defence, which generally responded to western critiques based on its supposed non-egalitarian nature.[105] Very briefly, Gandhi presented what he saw as the basic principles of the caste system—heredity and occupational differentiation underpinned by the theological imperatives of *karma* and rebirth—as the framework of a social order based on harmonious integrated relationships, rather than competition and class war, which were so manifest in western 'egalitarian' social orders. Where caste was defended, however, untouchability was unequivocally rejected. Gandhi rationalized this by making a conceptual distinction between the two. Whereas caste was an integral part of the Hindu way of life, untouchability was 'not a

sanction of religion' but rather 'a device of Satan'. It was a 'sin' which went directly against the 'spirit of the Vedas', a spirit that represented 'purity, truth, innocence, chastity, simplicity, forgiveness, godliness and all that makes a man or woman noble and brave'.[106] Atoning for this sin was perceived by Gandhi as an essential feature of the creation of a new society in India; as essential, and in fact inextricably bound up with, the need for independence:

> I have often told English officials that if they are friends and servants of India they should come down from their pedestal, cease to be patrons...and believe us to be equals in the same sense they believe fellow Englishmen to be their equals. ...I have gone a step further and asked them to repent and to change their hearts. Even so is it necessary for us Hindus to repent of the wrong we have done, to alter our behaviour toward those whom we have 'suppressed' by a system as devilish as we believe the English system of the government of India to be. We must not throw a few miserable schools at them, we must not adopt the air of superiority toward them. We must treat them as our blood brothers as they are in fact. We must return to them the inheritance of which we have robbed them. And this must not be the act of a few English-knowing reformers merely but it must be a conscious voluntary effort on the part of the masses. We may not wait till eternity for this much belated reformation. We must aim at bringing it about within this year.... It is a reform not to follow Swaraj but to precede it.[107]

On the basis of a paralleling of the two oppressions—colonial and caste—the eradication of untouchability is integrated with the objective of *swaraj,* bringing a sense of urgency to Gandhi's approach. There is, however, a shift in the weight of required agency between the two oppressions. Whereas he may appeal individually to British officials to 'repent and change their hearts' in relation to India, the main burden of agency lies with the people to mobilize and actively work—through *satyagraha*—towards the attainment of liberation. In the case of the oppression of untouchables, however, the burden of agency is reversed—it is the job of the oppressors to effect liberation. The urgency of the need for the eradication of untouchability is directed towards caste Hindus and their need for repentance; the call is for a moral shift in order that untouchables be accommodated 'as our blood brothers'. Untouchables themselves have little to do except be patient and wait for this to happen.

This point is illustrated by Gandhi's attitude towards the Vaikom *Satyagraha.* A major temple in this village in the state of Travancore was

targeted by the District Congress Committee due to its practice of disallowing untouchable access to roads surrounding the temple.[108] *Satyagraha* was launched in March 1924, with the District Congress sanctioning mixed groups of caste and untouchable *satyagrahis* to breach the temple bar on road use, which by this time was backed up by a prohibitory order of the District Magistrate. Although he supported the *satyagraha* campaign, Gandhi was opposed both to its extension to other temples and to the involvement of the national Congress organization; he treated it as a purely local dispute.[109] When he eventually visited Vaikom in March 1925, it was not to bolster or take charge of the *satyagraha* campaign. Rather it was to enter into dialogue with the *pandits* of the temple who had spearheaded resistance to the campaign. 'I have come,' he said, 'to reason with my orthodox friends.'[110] His objective, then, was to institute a process of repentance in the manner described above. Gandhi plunged into a theological debate in which he attempted to assert mutual respect and love between Hindus as the 'spirit of the Vedas'. His acceptance of the central principles of caste, *karma,* and rebirth, however, meant that he conspicuously failed to make any inroads into the beliefs of the *pandits* in relation to untouchability.[111] In effect, he failed to realize the conceptual distinction between caste and untouchability which his approach claimed to make. He therefore left Vaikom without effecting any form of compromise. The situation was resolved later that year, although it is unclear from source material whether the Brahmans capitulated or resorted to the ingenious measure of moving the road further away from the temple. In any case untouchables were denied actual entry to the Vaikom temple until 1936.[112]

After this experience Gandhi shifted his approach towards caste. He developed a vision of a reformed system based on an archetypal *varna-vyavastha.* This was a partially open system, in which each *varna* had some practical access to the qualities of the others:

> All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahman with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability and a Shudra with bodily labour. This, however, does not mean that a Brahman for instance is absolved from bodily labour, or the duty of protecting himself and others. His birth makes a Brahman predominantly a man of knowledge, the fittest by heredity and training to impart it to others. There is nothing, again, to prevent the Shudra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes. Only, he will best serve with his body and need not envy others their special qualities for service. But a Brahman who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls and has no knowledge. And so with the others who pride themselves upon their special qualities.[113]

The system, then, continued to operate on the basis of heredity and functional differentiation. This differentiation, however, was not absolute; there was some room for manoeuvre, based on the idea of equality of status and mutual respect. The system depended for its smooth operation on the absence of any sense of superiority or of envy. 'Varnashrama,' Gandhi helpfully adds, 'is self-restraint.' What appeared, therefore, to be a fresh approach based on structural change as a means of eradicating the idea of untouchability as a feature of caste, continued to base itself on a rather vague assertion that equality lay at the heart of the system. If only this equality could be realized, the oppressions of the system—including untouchability—would fall away.

Despite its somewhat radical appearance, then, Gandhi's post-Vaikom approach to caste and untouchability seems to reiterate the basic principles of horizontal organization: the binding together of Hindu society based on the idea of mutual respect, effected through the moral transformation of caste Hindus. This is certainly borne out by his approach to the problem of untouchability and his attitude to low caste mobilization in later years.[114] He continued to oppose any low caste mobilization that emerged as antagonistic to caste Hinduism. Duncan records that when a 'deputation of Scheduled Castes' sought Gandhi's advice as to how they could alleviate their predicament, he told them that 'instead of working for separate treatment for themselves, they should "endeavour to merge themselves in the ocean of Hindu humanity. That is the only possible way to free India".'[115] In the early 1930s he undertook a 'fast unto death' in response to the government's proposal to grant separate electorates to untouchables, and when he established the Harijan Sevak Sangh in 1932, it was made clear that 'while the League will work by persuasion among the caste Hindus to remove every vestige of untouchability the main line of work will be constructive, such as the uplift of Depressed Classes educationally, economically and socially which itself will go a great way to remove untouchability'.[116] Even the idea of 'persuasion' of caste Hindus, then, was to be secondary to the work of low caste 'uplift'.

Gandhi's attitude is indicative of the strength of the ideology of Hindu organization in the 1920s and early 1930s. Where his position was far removed from leaders such as Moonje, Parmanand, and Savarkar on the issue of, say, *satyagraha* as nationalist strategy, the issues of caste reform and low caste mobilization brought them somewhat closer together. During a tour of Maharashtra in 1927, for example, Moonje stated that the 'time has come for the declaration of equal public rights to all castes in social and religious matters'. 'The non-Brahmans of

Maharashtra,' he continued, 'ought to be satisfied if such a public declaration is made by the leaders,' adding that full equality could only be established by 'educating public opinion'. Moonje says that this public declaration would be 'an epoch-making leap of complete self-abnegation from our long established vested interests and rights of the caste system'.[117] Moonje's political antagonism towards Gandhi, then, did not prevent him making a statement about the status of caste with which the Mahatma would be hard-pressed to disagree. The idea of Hindu unity, it appears, had by the 1920s emerged as a pervasive force in political discourse.

This is not an attempt to associate Gandhi with the ideology of Hindu nationalism. It rather constitutes evidence of how the concept of modern Hindu identity presented itself as problematic to middle class Hindus. It was an identity searching for solid, even reputable, parameters through which to relate itself to other socio-religious identities in a highly politicized context. Different protagonists sought to assert these parameters in different ways, but for most the trajectory of low caste mobilization appeared to pose a direct threat to the whole idea of Hindu identity. This was so even for those like Gandhi who passionately denounced caste oppression. The developing ideology of Hindu nationalism was equally vulnerable to the idea of low caste mobilization. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the accommodation of low castes and untouchables had been a persistent problem for this ideology from the late nineteenth century onwards; during the 1920s, as low caste mobilization became more strident, it inevitably surfaced again as the key issue of debate between proponents of vertical and horizontal organization.

Notes

1. See Sarkar, *Modern India,* pp. 168–78 for a good summary of these economic changes.
2. Many better off peasants producing for the market were affected by strong differentials in price between imports and agricultural exports; poorer peasants and landless labourers were affected by price rises of coarse foodgrains; see ibid., pp. 170–1.
3. See H.F. Owen , 'Towards Nationwide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915–1918', in D.A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1968), pp. 159–95, esp. p. 183: 'For the first time, a network of local political committees covered much of British India.'

4. Jawaharlal Nehru, for example, who joined Annie Besant's League in 1916, states that 'The Home Rule Leagues were attracting not only all the old Extremists who had been kept out of the Congress since 1907 but large numbers of newcomers from the middle classes. They did not touch the masses'. See his *Autobiography* (Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1980), p. 31.
5. See Owen, 'Towards Nationwide Agitation and Organisation', p. 184.
6. On the extension of the franchise, the view of the Chief Commissioner of Central Provinces, B. Robertson, was fairly typical: 'It is impossible in existing circumstances to have the electors coming to the polls in their thousands. The basis of the franchise must be fairly wide, but...it [is] out of the question that it should be really broad; what we desire to see is a leavening of intelligence, which will spread to the mass as time goes on.' Note by the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, on Constitutional Reforms, 30 October 1918; Central Provinces Secretariat, General Administration Dept, A Progs for February 1919, File No. 7–1 (Bhopal). The Central Provinces electorate emerged in 1920 as a modest 140,000; see P. Robb, *The Government of India and Reform: Policies towards Politics and the Constitution 1916–1921* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1976), p. 112.
7. See Sarkar, *Modern India,* pp. 165–8.
8. In the Central Provinces Robertson put up some resistance to the principle: 'In the Central Provinces we are fortunately so circumstanced that the question of communal electorates can hardly be said to arise. The Mahomedans are but a fraction of the population and are widely scattered; it is next to impossible to suggest separate constituencies to meet their case'. Note by the Chief Comissioner, Central Provinces, on Constitutional Reforms, 30 October 1918, n.5. He was, however, forced to cede this position, accepting twenty-nine reserved Muslim seats in the Provincial Assembly: See D. Page, *Prelude to Partition: Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920–32* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982), pp. 33–4. Page points out the interesting position of the Central Provinces, which emerged as the only province where elected members of a majority community were in a position to command a majority in the Legislature. In every other province the government used reservations to disable non-official majorities.
9. Again, in Madras Governor Willingdon resisted the extension of separate electorates to non-Brahmans. He nevertheless had to agree to reserve 28 out of 65 general seats in the Madras Legislature; see Robb, *The Government of India and Reform,* pp. 112–13.
10. Those that did attend were shown no special favours. When Tilak arrived late for the opening session, Gandhi remarked tartly: 'I am not responsible for his being late. We demand swaraj. If one does not mind arriving late

by three quarters of an hour at a conference summoned for the purpose, one should not mind if swaraj too comes correspondingly late.' 'First Speech at Gujarat Political Conference', 3 November 1917, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter *CWMG),* vol. XIV (Government of India, Delhi, 1965), p. 48.

11. 'Second Speech at Gujarat Political Conference', 4 November 1917, *CWMG,* vol. XIV, p. 69.
12. See D. Hardiman, *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917–1934* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981), p. 89.
13. 'Hind Swaraj', CWMG, vol. X (Government of India, Delhi, 1963), p. 22.
14. B. Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Evaluation* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1989), p. 143.
15. Ibid., pp. 152–3.
16. 'Speech at Madras', 20 March 1919, *CWMG,* vol. XV (Government of India, Delhi, 1965), p. 142.
17. 'Press Statement on the Suspension of Civil Disobedience', 18 April 1919, *CWMG,* vol. XV, p. 244.
18. For a full treatment of the status of *ahimsa* in Indian tradition, see U. Tahtinene, *Ahimsa: Non-violence in Indian Tradition* (Rider, London, 1976); for an overview, see Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* pp. 108–12.
19. Quoted in Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* p. 114.
20. Both quotations from ibid., p.92.
21. See, for example, Nehru's comment about Gandhi's emergence as a political leader: 'He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling conditions.' J. Nehru, *Discovery of India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989 Centenary Edition), p. 358.
22. For a thorough account of the involvement of volunteers in the anti-Partition movement, see S. Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903–1908* (Peoples' Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973), pp. 336–60.
23. 'Instructions to Volunteers', 17 April 1918, *CWMG,* vol. XIV, p. 350.
24. Ibid., points 1–9 deal with behaviour.
25. 'Instructions to Volunteers', February 26 1919, *CWMG,* vol. XV, p. 119.
26. Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* p. 117.
27. See R. Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', in P. Chatterjee and G. Pandey (eds), *Subaltern Studies VII* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993), pp. 69–120: pp. 92–5.
28. 'Speech at Idgah', 22 July 1920, *CWMG,* vol. XVIII (Government of India, Delhi, 1965), p. 80. For similar examples see Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', pp. 105–7.

29. See, for example, his article in *Young India,* 8 September 1920, entitled 'Democracy vs. Mobocracy', *CWMG,* vol. XVIII, pp. 240–4. See also Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', pp. 107–14.
30. 'Democracy vs. Mobocracy', *CWMG,* vol. XVIII, p.240; he uses the phrase when complaining that 'volunteers often become demonstrators instead of remaining people's policemen.'
31. Ibid., p. 242.
32. 'Working Committee Resolutions at Bardoli', 12 February 1922, *CWMG,* vol. XXII (Government of India, Delhi, 1966), pp. 377–8.
33. Guha notes that on those occasions when violence did break out during the Non-cooperation Movement, 'politics as a collective secular activity was made to yield to spiritualised politics in its ultimate monadic form as the Mahatma, atoning for the violence of the masses, subjected himself to the ritual of a punishing and purifying fast'. 'Discipline and Mobilize', p. 118.
34. *Bombay Chronicle,* 18 February 1922, *CWMG,* vol. XXII, p. 407.
35. J. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915–1922* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974), p. 316.
36. See Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', p. 102.
37. Nehru, *Autobiography,* p. 121.
38. This of course does not deny the existence of political expression outside the public space; but this kind of expression was not legitimized, was not accepted as political expression, in the eyes of the state.
39. See Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', pp. 99–103 for an indication of how the claim of the Congress 'to speak for all was being contested more and more vigorously on both the major axes—that is, the communal and class axes—of Indian politics'.
40. Ibid., p. 97.
41. Other examples include the *satyagraha* campaigns of Guru-ka-Bagh, Jaito, Tarakeshwar, Borsad, Vaikom—all launched in 1922–3.
42. For a full account, see *Pranavir,* 15 April 1923, Reports on Indian Newspapers Published in the Central Provinces and Berar (hereafter RIN CP&B) No. 16 of 1923.
43. *Pranavir,* 13 May 1923, RIN CP&B No. 20 of 1923.
44. Many of whom were arrested before they reached Nagpur—see *Tarun Maharashtra,* 14 July 1923, RIN CP&B No. 29 of 1923.
45. The *Maharashtra,* the newspaper with the widest circulation in the Central Provinces, called it 'abject surrender on the part of the satyagrahis'. 29 August 1923, RIN CP&B No. 35 of 1923.
46. See *Maharashtra,* 28 March 1923, RIN CP&B No. 13 of 1923.
47. See, for example, editorials in the *Karmavir,* the *Lokmitra* and the *Prajapuksha,* RIN CP&B No. 22 of 1923.

48. In addition, it should be noted that because of nationalist boycott of Legislative Assemblies, channels for middle class nationalist complaint were further limited in the early 1920s.
49. See W. Anderson and S.D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism* (Vistaar, New Delhi, 1987), p. 32; B.V. Deshpande and S.R. Ramaswamy (edited by H.V. Seshadri), *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker* (Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1981), pp. 69–70.
50. *Khabar, Maharashtra,* 31 October 1923, RIN CP&B No. 44 of 1923.
51. Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* p. 70.
52. The *Mahratta,* 18 November 1923, stated that 20,000 were involved in one procession; see Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 32.
53. See Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province,* p. 100.
54. *Pranavir,* 2 December 1923, RIN CP&B No. 49 of 1923.
55. For other examples, see G. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India,* pp. 89–101.
56. *Hitavada,* 9 May 1923, RIN CP&B No. 19 of 1923.
57. *Pranavir,* 23 May, 28 June 1923, RIN CP&B Nos 21 & 27 of 1923.
58. 'Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee Report' (1931), reprinted in N.G. Barrier (ed.), *Roots of Communal Politics* (Heinemann, New Delhi, 1976), pp. 218–9.
59. See P. Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972), p. 197.
60. See 'Congress Cawnpore Riots Enquiry Committee Report', p. 228, for a list of major riots, totalling forty-three, between 1921 and 1931.
61. Others as a feature of identity in the sense developed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (Routledge, London, 1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1993); a 'fundamentally static notion of identity' based on the idea that 'there is an "us" and a "them", each quite settled, clear, unassailably self-evident'. This notion of identity is described by Said as 'the hallmark of imperialist cultures as well as those cultures trying to resist the encroachments of Europe.' See *Culture and Imperialism,* p. xxviii.
62. Jaffrelot, 'Hindu Nationalism: Strategic Syncretism in Ideology Building', p. 517.
63. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 6.
64. Ibid., p.19; see also the discussion of Jaffrelot's two-stage 'birthing' process of Hindu nationalism in Chapter 1.
65. The classic symbol of this time being Swami Shraddhanand's address from the pulpit of the Delhi Jama Masjid during the heady days of the Rowlatt *Satyagraha.* See Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* p. 109.

66. See, for example, K.N. Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in A.R. Desai, *Peasant Struggles in India* (Oxford University Press, Bombay), 1979, pp. 601–30.
67. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 24.
68. Ibid., p. 50.
69. For an overview of differing views of the rebellion, see R. Hardgrave, 'The Mappilla Rebellion 1921: Peasant Revolt in Malabar', in *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 11, no. 1, 1977, pp. 57–99: pp. 92–9.
70. On reasons for the government's angle, see Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 138.
71. See D.N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India 1920–1950* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983) pp. 78–82; Panikkar, 'Peasant Revolts in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', pp. 623–4; Sarkar, *Modern India,* pp. 216–17.
72. The *Times of India* states that 200 had been converted by 7 September; the *Pioneer* that 1200 had been converted by 8 September; see Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 140.
73. Certainly some newspapers displayed a callous contempt for the value of a Moplah peasant's life; for example, the 'special correspondent' of the *Madras Mail* states on 14 November 1923: 'I voice the sentiments of a host of victimised Hindus in Malabar when I say that it is their fervent desire, after their terrible experience, that the Moplahs as a race should be exterminated from their country.' Quoted in Hargrave, 'The Mappilla Rebellion 1921', p. 94.
74. RIN CP&B No. 38 of 1921; see also *Sankalpa,* 10 September: 'We are not disposed to believe in the alleged forcible conversion of the Hindus to Islam,' in ibid.
75. *Samajsewak,* 29 September 1921; RIN CP&B No. 41 of 1921.
76. See RIN CP&B Nos 39 and 40 of 1921 for evidence of this approach.
77. *Nagpur Samachar,* 27 September 1921, *Lokmatt,* 30 September 1921; RIN CP&B No. 41 of 1921. For Kurtkoti's contribution to the *sangathan* movement, see Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 23–4.
78. 'Forcible Conversions in Malabar—Dr Moonje's Report', Nagpur, 4 August 1923; Moonje Papers Nehru Memorial Library (NML); see also Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 20–1.
79. Quoted in Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 20.
80. See Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India,* pp. 139–41.
81. *Karmavir,* 13 January 1923, RIN CP&B No. 3 of 1923.
82. The *Mahratta,* 11 October 1903, blamed the dispute on the intervention of the Deputy Superintendent of Police in Nagpur city, who issued a ruling before the Dussehra holiday that 'no music was to be allowed to

the Hindus for about 10 paces on either side of a mosque under any conditions'.

83. J. Walker, Nerbudda Commissioner to Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces Police Dept, 7 December 1914; Central Provinces Secretariat (Police Dept), A Progs, May 1915, No. 1–19: 'Proposed Formation of Conciliation Boards for the Composition of Disputes between Hindus and Mohammedans.'
84. *Mahratta,* 11 October 1903.
85. The *Mahratta* suggested in relation to the Nagpur situation that 'a test civil suit would...afford a suitable solution of the important question of whether the Police have such authority as they have arrogated to themselves in prohibiting music for 10 paces on either side of a mosque.' Ibid.
86. The Deputy Commissioner, Betul, in 'Proposed Formation of Conciliation Boards for the Composition of Disputes between Hindus and Mohammedans', n. 97.
87. See letter from J.T. Marten, Secretary to Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces to Secretary to Government of India, Nagpur, 18 May 1915; in ibid.
88. *Khabar,* 31 October 1923, RIN CP&B No. 44 of 1923.
89. *Swatantra Hindusthan,* 17 November 1923, RIN CP&B No. 47 of 1923.
90. *Maharashtra,* 18 January 1925, RIN CP&B No. 4 of 1925.
91. The five specified processions were Raja's Ganapati, Raja's Dasehra, Raja's Bhadrapadya Ganapati, Jagnath Dindi, and Raja's Ram Navami; see 'Reference from the Bombay Govt. regarding the Procedure Adopted in the Matter of Hindu-Muslim Disputes in Central Provinces', Central Provinces Government, Political and Military Department (Confidential), 1927, File No. 113–I (Bhopal).
92. *Al Haq,* 15 November 1925, RIN CP&B No. 47 of 1925.
93. D. R. Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (Radhakrishna Prakashan, New Delhi), p. 49.
94. Moonje's Diary, 13 June 1927, Moonje Papers Reel 1.
95. See Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch Maker,* p. 71: 'Because of the in-built fear of the Muslims among the Hindus, the band troupes sometimes shirked to play before the Masjid. On such occasions, Doctorji himself would take over the drums and rouse the dormant manliness of the Hindus.' A similar story was also told by Vasant Rao Oke in interview,16 December 1995.
96. *Hitavada,* 11 September 1927.
97. The 1908 District Gazetteer noted that Mahars had 'combined to dig wells and in Nagpur have opened a school for members of their community'. *Central Provinces District Gazetteers, Nagpur District,* vol. A, p. 85.

98. G. Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: The Anti-Caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1995), p. 35.
99. Quoted in ibid.
100. *Bahishkrit Bharat,* 24 February 1923, RIN CP&B No. 9 of 1923.
101. *Hitavada,* 27 May 1925, RIN CP&B No. 22 of 1925.
102. *Maharashtra,* 31 May 1925, RIN CP&B No. 23 of 1925.
103. See *Swatantrya Hindusthan and Lokmatt,* 31 May 1925, RIN CP&B No. 23 of 1925.
104. Moonje's diary, 2 April 1926; Moonje Papers Reel 1 (NML).
105. For a summary, see Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* p.226.
106. 'The Sin of Untouchability', *Young India,* 19 January 1921; see *CWMG,* vol. XIX (Government of India, Delhi, 1966), pp. 242–3.
107. Ibid.
108. This was an extension of the principle of *theendal* or unapproachability. Two castes prevalent in Kerala, the *Ezhavas* and *Pulayas,* were barred from approaching higher castes nearer than 16 feet and 72 feet respectively. Eleanor Zelliot notes that the local Congress resolve was 'also an outgrowth of the Ilavas' (Ezhavas) own movement to gain political and religious rights. It came in the wake of the Ilavas' 1918 appeal to the Travancore government for the opening of state temples to all Hindus and their 1921 threat to convert in a body to Christianity'. Zelliot, 'Gandhi and Ambedkar: A Study in Leadership', in J.M. Mahar (ed.), *The Untouchables in Contemporary India* (University of Arizona, Tucson, 1972), pp. 69–96: p. 80.
109. See interview with *The Hindu,* 15 April 1924: 'I do not think that the leaders from all the parts of India can spare themselves and concentrate their energy directly on the movement,' see *CWMG,* vol. XXIII (Government of India, Delhi, 1967), p. 440; see also Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* p.146; Shraddhanand, who visited Vaikom in May, attempted to persuade Gandhi to widen the objectives of the campaign.
110. Quoted in Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* p. 223.
111. For some fascinating excerpts from these exchanges, see ibid., pp. 220–3.
112. See Zelliot, 'Gandhi and Ambedkar: A Study in Leadership', p. 80; for Ambedkar's criticism of Gandhi's handling of the Vaikom affair, see p. 81.
113. Quoted in R. Duncan (ed.), *The Writings of Gandhi* (Fontana, London, 1971), p. 179.
114. Parekh comments that in the wake of Vaikom 'he modified his language of discourse, intensified the educational campaign (amongst caste Hindus) and increased the harijan welfare work. However, he neither reconsidered his strategy nor mounted a new initiative.' *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform,* p. 235.

115. Duncan, *The Writings of Gandhi*, p. 183.
116. Quoted in Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform*, p. 239.
117. Press Statement, *Hitavada*, 17 July 1927.

6

Organization and the Development of Hindu Nationalism in the Twenties

It is clear that the 1920s was a period of intense ideological dynamism in Indian politics. Even within the confines of colonial public space, a variety of ideologies engaged with one another and attempted to gain a dominant position, a position of power in political discourse. Hindu nationalism emerged as one of these ideologies, competing with other political ideologies for the hearts and minds of ordinary Indians. The objective of this chapter is to understand how and where Hindu nationalism established itself in political discourse. It will become apparent that it did not follow a linear path of development. Rather, it was a process in which the varying ideological trends which have been identified as informing approaches to the political and social organization of Hinduism struggled for dominance. At the heart of this struggle was the idea of *sangathan*—the strident assertion of organization as the principal ideal of the Hindu 'nation'. The divergent ways in which this ideal was pursued, I will argue, are an indication of discursive splits in the approach of the middle class to political representation, splits which were to inform many of the dislocations of post-Independence politics in India.

Two major proponents of Hindu nationalism are examined here: the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). There is a great deal of difference between the two. The Mahasabha was by the mid-1920s a fairly high profile organization on the national political scene; it carried with it the weight of its self-image as the representative body of the Hindus, an image which was sustained, as we shall see, by reference to the colonial discourse of organization. Within this framework, it could operate on the basis of a 'template of polarization', through

which it gained legitimacy as the obverse of the Muslim League.[1] Thus by 1930 Mahasabha delegates (Moonje, Nanak Chand, and N.C. Kelkar[2]) were present at the first Round Table Conference in London, where they deliberated along with the British government, the Muslim League, the Liberals, and a big contingent from the Princely States on the possibilities of a federal assembly (the Congress, of course, was not represented, as it was at that time engaging the Government of India in the Civil Disobedience campaign, as a result of which most of its leaders, including Gandhi and Nehru, were in jail). The RSS, on the other hand, which was formed in 1925, was a small organization struggling to establish itself in the Central Provinces and across Maharashtra. It was not until after our period, the late 1930s and early 1940s, that it began to establish a presence in northern India, and so began to have an impact on national affairs. In giving so much weight to the RSS in this chapter, I am following the logic of the loose regional focus of this book, which has led me to turn to Nagpur as an example of localized responses to the flow of middle class ideologies in the public space. I am also, however, taking advantage of historical perspective, in the sense that the later expansion of the Sangh was to have a profound impact on Indian politics. Its early development, therefore, the ideologies and organizational models through which it situated itself in politics, are of particular importance. The comparison with the Mahasabha will illustrate the development of an alternative strategy in the RSS, a strategy which capitalized on wider political developments in an innovative manner.

The Organization of Hindu Nationalism I: The Hindu Mahasabha

At the fifth session of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, held at Ambala in December 1913, the following resolution was passed:

> This Conference is strongly of the opinion that in order to deliberate upon measures for safeguarding the interests of the Hindu community throughout India and elsewhere it is highly desirable that a General Conference of the Hindus of India be held at Hardwar on the occasion of the Kumbh in 1915, and it requests the following gentlemen to make the necessary arrangements for the purpose.[3]

In recalling this resolution, Swami Shraddhanand notes that 'Hindu leaders from all parts of the country were nominated to the Committee'. He then goes on to state, however, that only a handful of activists from Punjab and UP organized the 1915 Inaugural Session.[4] This image of a

grand front—'a flourish of trumpets', as Shraddhanand called it—supported by a rather desultory, skeletal framework is indicative of the character of the All-India Hindu Sabha (renamed the Mahasabha in 1921) during its early phase. As is suggested by its derivation from the Punjab Sabha, the All India organization was conceived as a body that would represent the 'Hindu community' in a symbolic fashion, within the colonial discourse of organization. It was also committed to the 'union and solidarity' of this community as 'one organic whole', without identifying itself with 'any particular sect or sects of the Hindu community'.[5] In other words, it pursued the objective of horizontal organization. The same ideological meshing which was evident in the Punjab Sabha, then, is also evident here.

The organization remained semi-dormant until the early 1920s, when in the context of non-cooperation it began to assume a more significant role in politics.[6] After a lapse of two years, the Mahasabha met at Hardwar in April 1921 and reconfigured itself as a nationalist style organization.[7] The 1922 Session at Gaya, presided over by M.M. Malaviya,[8] elaborated this image by creating an Organizing Committee to establish Sabhas in all provinces, with a view to extending the organization on to village level. In addition, it called for the creation of local volunteer groups to protect Hindu interests in communal riots. Although these resolutions were not generally backed up by practical measures, they did at least signify a new dynamism of thought in the Mahasabha.[9] It was this dynamism which underpinned the emergence of the *sangathan* movement as an integrated articulation of the ideology of Hindu organization. The Mahasabha provided the framework for this articulation, and its next Session, at Benaras in August 1923, was crucial in deciding the trajectory of the movement.

Swami Shraddhanand and the Articulation of Sangathan

The first conscious articulation of *sangathan* as a distinct movement in the 1920s is difficult to locate. Certainly in the run-up to the Mahasabha session in 1923 the press—particularly Malaviya's *Leader*—repeatedly referred to the need for Hindus to become organized as paramount:

> Nothing is now left for the Hindus but to organise themselves...They must as a community inspire respect before they can have unity on reasonable and equal terms with the Muslims. Their first duty, in their own interest, in the interest of the country, and also in that of Hindu-Muslim unity, is that they should organise, organise, organise.[10]

Only a greater sense of urgency, however, distinguishes this statement from earlier examples of the ideology of Hindu organization. It has

already been illustrated how this idea dominated the Lahore Conference of 1909. A further example is provided by Rampal Singh's Presidential Address to the 1918 session of the Mahasabha in Delhi. Referring to the Hindu 'community', he says that

> We have lost sight of the high ideals which used to pulsate and animate the hearts of our forefathers. The chief cause is that we are disorganised and disunited. It is for the Hindu Sabha to organise and unite the scattered atoms of our Community and to devise means for the amelioration of the whole, so that we might rise again to the same pinnacle of glory and civilisation which our forefathers had attained.[11]

When this plea for organization was translated into the notion of a *sangathan* movement, however, is not clear. Prakash suggests that the idea was mooted by Malaviya during the Congress Enquiry into the riot at Multan in September 1922.[12] Other evidence suggests that it developed only in conjunction with the campaign begun early in 1923 to reclaim through *shuddhi* a large group of nominal Muslims in Agra district of UP, known as Malkana Rajputs.[13] This crucial *shuddhi* campaign indicates the influence of the Arya Samaj, and in particular the radical leader of the *Gurukul* educational movement, Swami Shraddhanand.

Shraddhanand's involvement with the Mahasabha was relatively recent. Since taking *sannyas* in 1917, he had become increasingly involved in politics. He played a prominent role in the Rowlatt *Satyagraha* in Delhi in 1919 and also in the Non-cooperation Movement. Throughout this period he had attempted to put the issue of untouchability on the nationalist agenda, believing it to be the perfect constructive counterpoint to the essentially destructive campaign of non-cooperation.[14] The apparent reluctance of the Congress to address this issue in any practical sense was a major factor in Shraddhanand's eventual abandonment of mainstream nationalist politics: 'Noticing even the Congress powerless to absorb the untouchable,' he said early in 1923, 'I have made it the sole mission of my remaining life.'[15]

It was only in 1923, then, that Shraddhanand turned wholeheartedly to the Hindu Mahasabha. His involvement was linked very much to his determination to tackle untouchability, although this objective was overshadowed during 1923 by his strong commitment from February onwards to the Malkana *shuddhi* campaign. During the summer of 1923, as he toured Punjab and UP to gather support for the *shuddhi* campaign, Shraddhanand referred to the idea of *sangathan* and its promotion by the Mahasabha. He defined *sangathan* here as a movement 'to resuscitate

the ancient glory of Arya civilisation and to counteract the symptoms of degeneration displayed by the Hindus in the crises of Malabar and Multan'.[16]

During 1923, it is difficult to find a more precise indication of what the movement stood for than this rather vague invocation of the Golden Age and degeneration, suffixed by the urgency of current 'crises'. A comprehensive exposition is provided by Shraddhanand somewhat later, in his pamphlet *Hindu Sangathan: Saviour of the Dying Race.* Though completed in 1924, this pamphlet was not published until 1926. From the outset, Shraddhanand articulates *sangathan* in classic Arya terms: 'The ancestors of the present day Hindus, the Ancient Aryans, who gave their name to our motherland (the ancient Aryavarta) were a highly civilised and organised race.'[17] *Sangathan,* then, was the natural state of Arya society and the Aryan people ('an organised race'), a facet of the Golden Age. Deterioration from this state was the result of four central causes: first, conversion, either by force or aggressive missionary activity; second, perversion of the merit-based *varna* system, leading to proliferation and rigidity of castes, the introduction of idol worship and superstition, and the emergence of untouchability; third, child marriage and ban on remarriage of widows; and lastly, the dislocation of *ashrama dharma*—in particular, the loss of the ideal of *brahmacharya* as the framework of adolescent and young adult life. Shraddhanand pinpoints much of this debilitating decline as stemming from the great war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas, the focus of the *Mahabharata.* After this, he says, *'adharma* took the place of *dharma',* 'the ancient organization of the Aryas was cut asunder by mutual jealousies and pride', and 'disorganization became the order of the day'.[18]

The ideal of *sangathan,* then, is located by Shraddhanand very much as an attribute of the Aryan Golden Age. It is characterized first and foremost by the smooth operation of *varnashrama dharma.* Within this framework, the function of *brahmacharya* is accorded paramount importance: 'control of the senses through right study and by the practice of plain living and high thinking', he says, provides the discipline, aspiration (i.e. in terms of the allocation of *varna* on merit), and order upon which society is constructed.[19] Without the moral discipline of *brahmacharya,* for example, strict adherence to the *dharma* of the *grihastha,* the householder, is not possible, thus 'undermining the physical and moral health of the nation'.[20] Shraddhanand's emphasis on the key role of *brahmacharya* may be related to his position in the *Gurukul* movement—his remedy for the degeneration of *brahmacharya,* not surprisingly, is the full revival of the *Gurukul* system. It is nevertheless

reminiscent of Gandhi's emphasis on and practice of *brahmacharya,* and this provides us with the basis for an instructive comparison of their approach towards caste.

Both Gandhi and Shraddhanand saw morality and self-discipline as key attributes of *brahmacharya.* For both of them, therefore, the loss of this institution was the key to the moral degradation of contemporary society. Untouchability constituted one of the central features of this moral degradation and both pointed to it as symptomatic of the weakened state of Hindu society. As Shraddhanand states, 'The question of uprooting the curse of untouchability was the "sine qua non" of Nationality in India.'[21] Their approaches to the problem, however, were quite different. As we have seen, Gandhi attempted to eradicate untouchability through the moral transformation of caste Hinduism. Shraddhanand, on the other hand, referred unerringly to the compact, closed Hinduism of Swami Dayananda. Eradicating untouchability meant nothing more than untouchables 'regaining their former position', because 'it is plain...that they come from the same stock from which sprang the Brahman, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya'.[22] *Shuddhi* was the practical means through which this reintegration could be achieved and the Arya vision of *varnashrama dharma* would form the framework of the reintegrated, reorganized society. If Gandhi's approach was a reflection of the influence of horizontal organization, then Shraddhanand's was very much a reflection of that of vertical organization.

In fact Shraddhanand embellished his Arya-based vision of *sangathan* with a very familiar institutional notion:

> The first step which I propose is to build one Hindu Rashtra Mandir at least in every city and important town, with a compound which could contain an audience of 25 thousands and a hall in which *katha* from Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata could be daily recited.[23]

Here, the Samaj Mandir, such an important feature of the Arya Samaj's transformative trajectory in relation to caste Hinduism, is replicated in the wider context of Hindu *sangathan.* In many ways Shraddhanand had simply transposed the central transformative principles of Arya ideology on to this widened context. The *sangathan* movement became an opportunity for the realization of Dayananda's original objective of a transformation of Hindu samaj. Nowhere is this intention more clear than in Shraddhanand's approach to *shuddhi* as a feature of *sangathan.* Indeed, it is over this issue that the movement witnessed a decisive internal

battle during the Mahasabha session of August 1923 and the special Session that followed it in February 1924. Yet again the old tensions over horizontal and vertical organization underpinned this battle.

Shuddhi, Sangathan and the Triumph of Horizontal Organization

The re-emergence of *shuddhi* as an issue of critical importance during and after the Moplah rebellion provided the context for this struggle. When news of the Malabar conversions reached northern India in September 1921, it was the Arya Samaj which responded proactively. The College wing Pratinidhi Sabha in Punjab, under the leadership of Hans Raj, immediately launched an appeal for funds and dispatched an *updeshak* (missionary), Pandit Rishi Ram, to organize a programme of reclamation. The United Provinces Pratinidhi Sabha subsequently campaigned vigorously to raise funds to support Hans Raj's initiative.[24] The Arya Samaj was able to respond promptly to this crisis for two reasons. First, it had the institutional structure to generate a response both in terms of finance and appropriate personnel. Second, the Samaj had years of experience in *shuddhi* work and it was clear from the start that, despite the widespread destruction of homes and businesses during the Moplah rebellion, the principal objective of relief work was to be the reclamation of forcibly converted Hindus.

Rishi Ram and his fellow Aryas in the Malabar mission did not have a local Samaj structure to fall back on as the Samaj was still very weak in the south.[25] Their approach to *shuddhi* had therefore to be somewhat different if it was to have any real impact. They had no alternative but to work closely with representatives of local orthodoxy.[26] In fact, it is unclear exactly how much influence the Samaj had in bringing about reconversions in Malabar.[27] Local orthodox leaders appear to have taken the initiative and the actual processes of reconversion were decided at a meeting of *pandits* in Calicut in 1922, under the auspices of the ruling prince of Calicut, Zamorin Raja. These processes were highly ritualistic, and would almost certainly have been rejected by a northern Shuddhi Sabha.[28] A significant point, however, was that they were guided by a fourth- or fifth-century document known as the *Devala Smriti.* The *Smriti* was a short Sanskrit document giving details of ritual activities to be followed as a result of pollution through contact with *mlecchas,* or non-Hindus.[29] Whatever the extent of Arya involvement in the reconversions, the Samaj certainly did not object to the use of this *Smriti* and its prescribed rituals, which resulted in the reclamation of between 2,500 and 3,000 Hindus.[30]

For Sanatanists, this apparent orthodox sanction of *shuddhi* provided fresh impetus for involvement in the field of purification and, more significantly, reconversion. The Malkana *shuddhi* campaign was the testing ground for this involvement. The so-called Malkana Rajputs were nominal Muslims living in villages across the western part of the United Provinces. Although a great deal of their religious practice could be considered Hindu, they had no social contact with caste Rajputs and, crucially, they were consistently returned as Muslim in census reports. A Rajput Shuddhi Sabha had been organized as early as 1907 by local caste organizations but had little sustained success.[31] At a meeting in Agra early in 1923, Shraddhanand proposed the foundation of a fresh organization, the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha, to which he was duly appointed president. The Sabha was at first a genuine coalition of forces, incorporating Sikhs and Jains as well as Sanatanists and of course Aryas. It is this practical coalition which made the Malkana *shuddhi* such an important symbol of the *sangathan* movement. Aryas again showed a willingness to subsume their own beliefs in order to ensure Sanatani involvement. Commenting on a *shuddhi* ceremony in March 1923, the *Leader* notes that 'Sanatani Hindu Pandits conducted the formal ceremony of *yaggi* in the presence of Swami Shraddhanand'.[32] Even the radical Shraddhanand, then, appears to have turned a blind eye to ritual as a feature of the ceremony in the interests of a united front.[33]

The Malkana Rajputs constituted an ideal target for a unified *shuddhi* campaign, principally because of their clear link into high caste Hinduism. They could claim descent from the Jadun Rajput caste, having been nominally converted in return for land rights during the Mughal period, the name 'Malkana' deriving from *'milkayat'* or ownership of land.[34] From the point of view of Sanatanists, therefore, the dilemma of how to accommodate purified Malkanas did not arise; they were simply absorbed into their nominal *biradri*.[35] The collaboration was undoubtedly strengthened by the presence of Muslim organizations in the area, working to counter the influence of the *shuddhi* campaign through *tabligh* (an Islamic 'equivalent' of *shuddhi*, in the sense of an organized movement seeking conversion to Islam). Tensions nevertheless existed between Aryas and Sanatanists working within the campaign. Aryas were unhappy with the idea of Malkanas being 'removed from one form of false religion and...placed in another'[36]—i.e. being reclaimed by the orthodox *biradris*. Sanatanists were uncomfortable about working with Aryas and a purely Sanatanist organization, the Punah Samskar Samiti, was set up soon after the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha began work.

Tension was brought to a head at the 1923 Session of the Mahasabha at Benaras. Shraddhanand tabled three resolutions based on the Arya vision of vertically organized Hinduism, which, as we have seen, informed his approach to *sangathan.* The first dealt with untouchables, calling for practical concessions (access to wells, schools, etc.) as a prelude to their assimilation into the 'organic whole in the great body of the Aryan fraternity' (i.e. through *shuddhi*). The second dealt specifically with the Malkana Rajputs. The third dealt more generally with *shuddhi* as a process of conversion from other religions, calling for acceptance 'by the whole Hindu community' of converts regardless of which 'sect' had performed the *shuddhi* rites. This alludes to the theoretical recognition of merit-based *varna,* in the sense that reclaimed Aryas would be invested with twice-born status in accordance with Dayananda's flexible *varna* structure.[37]

The only resolution dealt with immediately was that referring to the Malkana Rajputs. The resolution that emerged stated that the Malkanas 'should be taken back into the Hindu fold in the castes to which they originally belonged'.[38] This was doing no more than confirming the righteousness of the *shuddhi* campaign as it stood.

Both of Shraddhanand's other resolutions, however, were referred to a committee of *pandits* for consideration. This committee, consisting of 75 *pandits,* met in January 1924 and the results of their deliberations were adopted as Mahasabha policy at a special session in February. Concession was made in relation to the first resolution on the issue of untouchability, in that access to wells, temples, and schools was generally encouraged. At the same time, however, the resolution tabled made it clear that this concession would not stretch to a consideration of *shuddhi* amongst untouchables, stating that it was 'against scripture and the tradition to give the untouchables *yajyopavit* [i.e. investiture with sacred thread], to teach the Vedas and to interdine with them'.[39] Although Samajists present at this meeting were able to amend this resolution by qualifying it as the belief of a 'very large body of Hindus, i.e. the Sanatanists', it was clear that many of the *shuddhi* rites conducted by the Samaj amongst low caste and untouchable groups would not be recognized by the Mahasabha.

The other referred resolution, dealing with conversions, emerged with conditions attached. 'Any non-Hindu was welcome to enter the fold of Hinduism,' the adopted resolution ran, 'though he could not be taken into any caste'.[40] This curious statement again ensured the preservation of the existing caste structure, whilst attempting to confront the problem of *shuddhi* as conversion. The implication of Shraddhanand's original

text—that the Mahasabha should recognize the theoretical validity of merit-based *varna*—was resolutely rejected. Significantly, however, the new policy did not rule out conversion and this indicates an expansion of the idea of horizontal organization. Conversion without caste was possible as converts could be channelled into the alternative structure of the Arya Samaj, from where the purity of caste Hindus could be affected only remotely. In effect, the statement could make sense only if the Arya Samaj was perceived as part of the horizontal organization of Hinduism.

This is indicative of the predicament of the Arya Samaj as a facet of the *sangathan* movement. It has been shown how even in the context of the 1909 Hindu Conference, Punjabi Samajists eschewed reformism in the name of consolidation. By the mid-1920s, as the country became embroiled in an unprecedented wave of communal rioting, the Samaj was increasingly drawn into the ideology of *sangathan* at any cost. The idea of a catholic, horizontal unity based on the perceived tolerance of the Hindu tradition, encompassing all sects and dishing out theoretical respect to all levels of Hindu society, became the defining principle of Hindu representation. No discord could be expressed without negating this defining principle. Instead, the Mahasabha promoted signifiers of Hinduism which reflected this idea of unity and consensus—cow protection, the promotion of Hindi, Sanskrit and Nagari, *swadeshi* as a facet of Hindu culture, service to widows and low caste/untouchable groups (but, again, no change in status). In contrast, controversial issues relating to the nature of organized Hinduism, such as *shuddhi*, and the relationship of untouchables to caste Hindus generally, became increasingly subject to the parameters of this unity.[41]

An example of this overriding attitude is provided by the Central Provinces Provincial Conference of the Hindu Sabha in 1927. The Central Provinces Sabha tried hard to encompass the Maharashtrian non-Brahman movement[42] and at the 1927 Session a strong non-Brahman contingent attended. Waman Rao Ghorpade, a prominent Mahar leader, attempted to move a resolution calling for the abolition of caste. Moonje records the attempts of Lajpat Rai, who was presiding, to persuade Ghorpade to withdraw the resolution, 'as it is against the present policy of the Hindu Mahasabha which holds in itself all shades of thought and opinion though the conference has full sympathy with the resolution'. Although Ghorpade complied, Moonje comments that 'there was one Mahar man...who gave a fiery harangue from his place in Ghorpade's group in the large audience but we smothered it in expressions of sympathy and the unpleasantness was avoided'.[43] This indicates precisely

the approach of the Mahasabha towards low caste reform. A surfeit of sympathy, but no 'unpleasantness'. It was an attitude which Swami Shraddhanand was unable to accommodate. Some months earlier he had resigned from the Mahasabha, commenting in his resignation statement that 'the Mahasabha does not consider it its duty to work for those social improvements which are utterly essential in order to save the Hindu community from total ruin, and the Sabha even puts obstacles in the way of its members who try to fulfil that very duty'.[44]

By this time, then, Shraddhanand had conceded that his notion of *sangathan* could not be effected through the Mahasabha.

This consolidation of horizontal organization as the basis of Mahasabha *sangathan* was accompanied by continued commitment to symbolic representation. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Mahasabha remained a relatively unstructured organization with little local-level organization. The 1929 session at Surat did pass resolutions designed to 'organize Hindu Sabhas in every village and town', and called on 'all Hindu leaders' to establish Sabhas 'in places where they do not exist at present.'[45] These somewhat vague appeals, however, were still not supported by a specific programme of organizational development.[46]

Nevertheless the Mahasabha created the space for the elaboration of Hindu organization as a significant ideology in Indian political discourse. It was the natural focal point for middle class Hindus looking to extend these notions of organization, to find a more cogent expression of them in the modern world. The idea of *Hindutva* was increasingly to encapsulate this expression.

V.D. Savarkar and the Articulation of Hindutva

A good deal of work has been done recently on *Hindutva,* or 'Hinduness', as the defining principle of Hindu nationalism.[47] This concept appears to encapsulate the cultural justification of Hindu nationalism. Because of this, its first full articulation as a Hindu nationalist 'manifesto', in Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's 1923 work *Hindutva/Who is a Hindu?* (hereafter *Hindutva*), is often cited as the first time the idea of the Hindu nation had been fully expressed.[48] Undoubtedly, Savarkar's short book has been a major influence for many Hindu nationalists, providing a compact statement of the ideological components of Hindu nationalism. In addition, it was adopted as a kind of long-term statement of objectives for the Hindu Mahasabha, and its author was to become the foremost leader of the Sabha in the run-up to Independence and Partition. The current study, however, presents Hindu nationalism as a gradual ideological development. The themes to which Savarkar repeatedly returns in

Hindutva revolve around the now familiar idea of boundaries, defining the limits of Hinduism and its relationship with external forces. Such preoccupations situate *Hindutva* as a feature of this ideological development.

The idea of the Hindu nation is an example of this. Its development can be identified in the articulation of Hindu organization. The Sabha movement in the Punjab was examined in Chapter 4 as an attempt to encompass Hinduism by recruiting representatives of a kind of spectrum of beliefs. This idea was extended and developed by the Mahasabha, and the general notion of *sangathan* as articulated after the effective defeat of Shraddhanand's resolutions is a reflection of this. The Hindu 'community' was entreated to become organized; it should in some sense pull together and become a more forceful, a more 'real' unit in the modern world. For those seeking to effect this ideal, articulating the unit was of course central. What emerges is a gradual development from a community made up of several components towards the composite notion of a nation—a unit, a constituency, with real meaning in the modern world.

This development is evident in the campaign to establish the Banaras Hindu University. The first prospectus of the University, published in 1906, states that the University will 'train teachers of religion for the preservation and promotion of Sanatana Dharma which is inculcated by the Srutis, Smritis and Puranas, and which recognises varna and ashrama', and further that 'all religious work (will) be under the control of Hindus who accept and follow the principles of the Sanatana Dharma'.[49] By 1911 this approach had been modified. In his statement on the University during this year, Malaviya comments that 'every nation cherishes its own religion (and) the Hindus are no exception to that rule'. He then goes on to express the mutuality of this nation, stating 'There is visible at present a strong desire for greater union and solidarity among all the various sections of the community, a growing consciousness of common ties which bind them together and which make them sharers in sorrow and in joy.'[50] Malaviya, then, reflects a movement towards composite solidarity expressed in the idea of the nation, shedding the somewhat aggressive exclusivism of the earlier commitment to *sanatana dharma*.

Even in the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, the nation had begun to supersede orthodoxy as the projected constituency. In 1915, the Mahamandal announced its impending session at Benaras by describing it as an 'All-India Conference of Hindus', stating that

invitations would be sent...to every Hindu gentleman who can speak for his sect, order, class or caste. The representative character of the conference...would be so thorough, complete and beyond question as to impart to its decisions the prestige and authority of the united voice of the Hindu nation.[51]

The representative sweep of the Mahamandal, then, had moved on from the 1902 invocation of 'the whole of the orthodox classes of the Hindus in India', to 'the united voice of the Hindu nation'.

Of course, in both these cases the nation is expressed very much in religious terms and it is invoked in a symbolic manner, as a means of representing the idea of a composite solidarity—a religious *sangathan.* This, in one sense, is further indication of the influence of symbolic representation in Indian politics, particularly politics related to religious representation. Savarkar moved away from this by stepping self-consciously out of the realm of religion and into the realm of culture. In discussing the ancient term Arya he states that 'it must be clearly pointed out that the definition is not based on any theological hair-splitting or religious fanaticism'. Rather, he says, it meant 'all those who had been incorporated as parts integral in the nation and people that flourished on this our side of the Indus whether Vaidik or Avaidik, Brahmana or Chandal'. By the same token, 'Mlechcha' referred to 'foreigners nationally and racially and not necessarily religiously'.[52] On this basis Savarkar's notion of *Hindutva* was a radical extension of the idea of horizontal organization, cutting through the problem of internal division and tension with grandiloquent catholicity. This unproblematic approach was quite unusual in the context of the early 1920s, reflecting the singular conditions in which the book was produced.

In his early years Savarkar, a Chitpavan Brahman from Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, was a revolutionary nationalist. In 1909 he was implicated in the Jackson assassination case and a year later, after his dramatic temporary escape in Marseilles, he was finally sentenced to transportation for life to the harsh conditions of the Cellular Jail in Andaman. His escape and re-arrest on French soil led to a questioning of the actions of the government in international law, and this ensured that Savarkar maintained a high profile in the public space even after his incarceration.[53] Not only was Savarkar perceived as an ardent and committed nationalist; he had also been the victim of manifestly unjust treatment from the government. The writing of a man with such impeccable nationalist credentials, then, was bound to have an impact.

The very production of *Hindutva,* furthermore, was an indication of Savarkar's heroic resistance. As the Preface to the Second Edition states,

'It was on the whitewashed walls of his solitary cell in the Andamanees [*sic*] prison that the first outlines of this book were sketched, chapters and points fixed and the definition versified.'[54] Having been transferred back to a series of mainland jails in 1921, he wrote out the manuscript and 'through various surreptitious channels parts of it continued to be cleverly smuggled out of those Indian Prison walls till at last the whole work reached its destination'. The book itself, then, seemed to echo the acts of heroism and sacrifice which it highlights as aspects of Hindu history. It was in itself a symbol of the projected quality of Hindu nationalism.[55]

As well as giving the book an aura of heroism, this context meant that it was written in comparative isolation. Not only had Savarkar been in prison for some twelve years by the time the book was published; before this he had been in Europe for five years. He was also a non-religious man who had little time for ritual niceties. I would suggest that the unproblematic catholicity of *Hindutva* is partly a product of this distance from the debates around the organization of Hinduism.[56] A comparison with Shraddhanand's *Hindu Sangathan* is revealing. Whereas the latter is preoccupied with the problems of contemporary Hinduism—in particular the problem of untouchability, the 'sine qua non of Nationality in India', Savarkar easily encompasses untouchables as an integral feature of *Hindutva*. In the 'prolonged furious conflict' to protect their nationality, he says, 'Sanatanists, Satnamis, Sikhs, Aryas, Anaryas, Marathas and Madrasis, Brahmins and Panchamas—all suffered as Hindus and triumphed as Hindus'.[57] And again, 'Some of us are Brahmans and some Namashudras or Panchamas; but Brahmans or Chandalas—we are all Hindus and own a common blood.'[58]

This notion of common blood or race is particularly significant in the legitimation of horizontal organization in *Hindutva*. It is one component of Savarkar's first formula for the identification of Hindus: *rashtra-jati-sanskriti,* or nation–race–culture.[59] In effect, Savarkar reverses the idea of *jati* (most commonly translated as caste—i.e. as distinct from *varna*) as divisive, making it the touchstone of the racial unity of the Hindus:

> The very castes which you owing to your colossal failure to understand and view them in the right perspective, assert to have barred the common flow of blood into our race, have done so more truly and more effectively as regards the foreign blood than our own. Nay is not the very presence of these present castes a standing testimony to a common flow of blood from a Brahman to a Chandal?[60]

Savarkar rationalized this argument by reference to the idea of sanctioned intermarriage.[61] It is this idea, he says, which created the caste system,

endlessly proliferating through the union of members of different castes. All castes, therefore, were bound by the same blood, the same race. In addition, a further co-mingling had been caused by the existence of caste rules. Those who broke the rules would be outcast, and after all, he states rather pragmatically, 'being outcast from a caste, which is an event of daily occurrence, is only getting incorporated with some other'.[62]

Here, then, Savarkar rejects the stigma of hierarchical oppression almost entirely, through what he sees as the overriding commonality of Hindu blood. All castes, untouchables, and *adivasis* were part of the same organic whole which was *Hindutva.* The caste system existed simply as a rationalizing and ordering network within this whole:

> All that the caste system has done is to regulate its noble blood on lines believed—and on the whole rightly believed—by our saintly and patriotic lawgivers and kings to contribute most to fertilise and enrich all that was barren and poor, without famishing [*sic*] and debasing all that was flourishing and nobly endowed.[63]

The idea of horizontal organization, the binding together of Hindus without disrupting contemporary caste status, was thus eloquently reiterated by *Hindutva,* precisely at a time when it was most severely under attack from Shraddhanand and the Arya attempt to instal caste reform as a key Mahasabha ethos.

Underpinning this approach to organization and caste was a perception of Indian history which resisted to a remarkable degree one of the principal structures of Orientalism—the idea of Hindu degeneration. Caste proliferation is certainly perceived as historical, as it is, for example, by Shraddhanand. But whereas the latter sees it as both cause and effect of the decline from the Golden Age of Vedic Hinduism, Savarkar perceives it simply as a facet of historical development that only helped to preserve and expand the influence and power of the Hindu race. This was particularly so in the wake of Buddhist decline in India—a decline of sorts, when the Hindu race fell prey to the excessive 'universalism' and 'passivity' of Buddhism, before the national sensibility of the race reasserted itself.[64] But the Mughal invasions, so important in previous versions of 'Hindu history' as a catalyst to degeneration, are not presented as a symptom of Hindu decline. Rather, 'peace and plenty' lulled Hindus into a false sense of security which was shattered by the forces of Islam, the 'veritable human Sahara whirling and columning up bodily in a furious world storm'. The invasions are presented as part of a pan-Islamic attack on Asia and Africa, in which India alone resisted suppression: 'Day after day, decade after decade, century after century, the ghastly

conflict continued and India single-handed kept up the fight morally and militantly.'[65] Consistently, then, Savarkar refuses to accept the notion of degeneration. By side-stepping this overriding issue, the patriotic rhetoric of his quasi-historical account constructs a more brazen, aggressively triumphalist vision of the Hindu nation, unburdened by the problems and preoccupations of other ideologues of Hindu organization.

Hindutva also stands out because it does not dwell self-consciously on the issue of the *sangathan* movement, when this notion dominated Hindu politics of the period. There is a reference in the last few pages to the need to 'consolidate the race', for the 'Hindu people (to) get fused and welded into an indivisible whole'. There is also a veiled threat to low caste movements and potential converts ('Those of you who in a fit suicidal...dare to disown the name Hindu will find to their cost that in doing so they have cut themselves off from the very source of our racial life and strength').[66] The principal objective of the book, however, is to establish a broad definition of what it means to be Hindu and proclaim the history of this 'Hindu race' or nation with a quite unbridled sense of triumphalism.[67] Nevertheless it must be emphasized that the issues that Savarkar addresses are the same issues that underpinned the *sangathan* movement. Organization in this sense was implicit in his vision of the Hindu nation.

Hindutva was unquestionably a text designed for a middle class readership. Not only is it in English, but it is also characterized by what is at times a most obscure and florid rhetoric. The first sentence of the book makes it abundantly clear that this text is not for the un- or even traditionally-educated:

> We hope that the fair Maid of Verona who made the impassioned appeal to her love to change a name that was 'nor hand, nor foot, nor arm, nor face, nor any other part belonging to a man' would forgive us for this our idolatrous attachment to it when we make bold to assert that, 'Hindus we are and love to remain so!'[68]

The irony apparent in Savarkar's 'idolatrous' defiance of Shakespearean wisdom only increases the impression of this work as directed at a very limited audience—precisely the audience, in fact, that the Hindu Mahasabha appealed to for active support. English-educated, high and middle caste Hindus, fearful for their political position and their employment prospects in the post-Montford polity.

Nevertheless *Hindutva* had nothing to say in terms of practical steps towards the consolidation and expansion of this support base. Despite the frequent characterization of the text as a 'scientific analysis' of what

it means to be Hindu,[69] it has been noted that Savarkar did not deal explicitly with the issue of *sangathan.* As such, *Hindutva* reaffirmed the tendency in horizontal organization to overlook the means of effecting organization and hence to drift again towards a reiteration of symbolic representation as a means of bringing the nation into being. A related and supporting feature here was the continued reliance of the Hindu Mahasabha on aristocratic support. In the absence of a popular organizational structure, the Mahasabha was heavily reliant on the patronage of conservative notables and princes such as Laxmanrao Bhonsla, the heir to the disestablished kingdom of Nagpur who supported Moonje's activities quite heavily. This interrelated reliance on symbolic representation and aristocratic support severely limited the political position of the Mahasabha in the post-Independence period.[70]

A parallel development of the ideology of Hindu organization, however, signalled a quite radical departure from this pattern. The establishment and growth of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in Nagpur channelled the idea of *sangathan* into a different discursive framework.

The Organization of Hindu Nationalism II: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

Like Savarkar's *Hindutva,* the historical and ideological development of the RSS is a subject which has been quite comprehensively covered by a variety of scholars. Christophe Jaffrelot is the most recent to examine these issues in detail and little would be gained by duplicating his excellent coverage, which draws both on earlier quite thorough accounts and on a variety of new sources, including the valuable contribution of oral history accounts.[71] The development of the argument in this book, however, does lead to some re-interpretations of early Sangh history. For Jaffrelot, the emergence of the Sangh is a further example of the strategy of stigmatization and emulation of threatening Others which built on that developed by Savarkar. Part of this process was the incorporation of notions of asceticism and the 'egalitarian sect' *(sampradaya)* as conduits for the emulation of 'western individualistic values'.[72] I will argue against this analysis by highlighting key elements of RSS development in the context of themes of organization, and in contrast to the pattern of development in the Mahasabha. In keeping with the way in which such developments have been viewed, the emergence of the RSS will not be perceived as a 'natural' culmination of the ideological development of Hindu nationalism. Rather, I will illustrate it as a seminal

clashing of discursive forms, which effectively constituted a fissure in the ideological meshing previously noted between horizontal organization and symbolic representation. My argument suggests that this was a highly significant departure in the history of Hindu nationalist ideology.

Early History of the RSS: The Pattern of Expansion

RSS literature cites the founding of the Sangh in 1925 as the work of Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, who would later go on to become the first *Sarsanghchalak,* or absolute leader of the Sangh.[73] Hedgewar was a Deshastha Brahman; his family was resident in Nagpur and his father followed a traditional priestly occupation. They were by no means well-off and when both his parents died of plague in 1902, Hedgewar was left at the age of thirteen to fend largely for himself. It does appear, however, that he received substantial help even in his early years from B.S. Moonje, a close associate of Tilak and, as we have seen, a budding Hindu nationalist.[74]

This Tilakite association was continued into the 1920s, and some non-RSS sources cite the involvement of several Tilakite politicians in the establishment of the Sangh in 1925.[75] Certainly, it is evident from Moonje's own diaries that his association with Hedgewar was fairly close. Whenever Moonje was in Nagpur, Hedgewar is a consistent presence in the diaries. RSS members, however, are referred to as 'Hedgewar's volunteers' and the actual organization of the Sangh does not appear as a concern of this national-level politician.[76] This is perhaps not surprising, as the Sangh was at this time an extremely small organization. Hedgewar's association, however, with more prominent politicians—established particularly since his involvement in the Nagpur Congress of 1920—almost certainly gave the organization a particular public profile in the locality.[77]

This profile was quickly enhanced by the Sangh's first formal public action. This was during the *Ram Navami* festival in April 1926. *Ram Navami* was celebrated as a regional *mela* at the temple complex of Ramtek near Nagpur.[78] *Melas* at Ramtek were characterized by a certain amount of chaos and crime, and Hedgewar led the *swayamsevaks* in a stewarding role, enforcing queues, providing drinking water, and expelling corrupt practitioners.[79] Significantly, this was the first occasion on which the *swayamsevaks* wore their now familiar uniform of khaki shorts, white shirts, and caps. This was the same uniform as that worn by the organizational force directed by Hedgewar at the 1920 Congress Session in Nagpur.[80] At Ramtek, then, the Sangh presented itself specifically as a force of order and organization in the context of a public gathering.

Although there was obviously a religious agenda here, the RSS role was not necessarily communally inspired: the *swayamsevaks* are reported to have 'driven off' both 'Muslim fakirs and brahmin pandits'.[81] The emphasis is more on the bringing of order and justice for the benefit of ordinary pilgrims. This formula of mixing organizational work with a kind of social service has been an enduring feature of Sangh activity.[82]

The first permanent unit, or *shakha,* of the Sangh was established soon after this, at Mohite Wada in Mahal district of Nagpur city.[83] By the end of that year, three other *shakhas* had been established in the Mahal area, as well as one in the Sitabaldi area of the city.[84] These small, very localized units acted as the building blocks of RSS expansion. Over the next few years the organization expanded gradually across Maharashtra through the establishment of *shakhas,* often after a visit to the area by Hedgewar or one of his associates.[85] *Shakha* activities ranged from physical games, through marching and *lathi* training, to singing and ideological discussion (*bauddhik* classes). Three aspects of the *shakha* structure need to be emphasized here. First, *shakhas* convened at the same times each day. RSS hagiography cites Sister Nivedita, the Irish-born disciple of Vivekananda, as the inspiration for this, through an apparently Christian notion of religiosity: 'Congregate and pray together for fifteen minutes everyday, and Hindu society will become an invincible society.'[86] This synchronization of activity became more powerful as the organization expanded. Thus the second *Sarsanghchalak,* M.S. Golwalkar, was able to point to it as a symbol of the national significance of the RSS: 'Throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan, not only in towns and cities but in far off hamlets, hills and dales, these inspiring scenes and soul-stirring songs greet us regularly and punctually at the time of sunrise, sunset or at night everyday. We call it shakha.'[87]

Second, recruitment to the *shakha* was directed at the very young. Dr S.B. Warnekar was only 9 years old when he joined the Mohite Wada *shakha* in 1927. He recalls that most of the boys he saw in the *shakha* were older than him. However, when he asked Dr Hedgewar if he could join, he was told that he should collect ten boys his age, then he would be able to join. The next day he brought ten boys from his neighbourhood and so gained entry.[88] This brings us to the third point to note in relation to the *shakha:* recruitment occurred very much through word of mouth. Warnekar described it as a 'friends' circle' approach to recruitment. As a result, recruitment during this early period was confined to a particular social/caste stratum: middle class and lower middle class, upper caste (mostly Brahman) boys. Much has been made of this high caste, middle class profile.[89] There is no doubt that the disciplining of high caste youth

was a feature of the organization; as Moonje commented in 1927, 'I wish that many more young Brahmin lads go though such discipline and experience.'[90] Considering the ideological trajectory and middle class base of the RSS, however, this high caste domination was not extraordinary. It had also, after all, been a feature of socio-religious reform organizations like the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission, and indeed of the early Congress organization.

These three elements help us establish a profile of RSS expansion during these early years. The accent on youth and 'friends' circle' recruitment emphasizes the localized nature of expansion; the synchronization of *shakha* activity continually puts this local setting into a wider and ever expanding context. This simple model allowed the RSS to expand in Maharashtra and later, in the 1930s, in the north, relying on similar urban and semi-urban middle class settings where the three elements had most impact.

One further element also needs to be taken into account: the communal riot. In September 1927 a serious riot occurred in Nagpur city. Three days of rioting resulted in 20 deaths and 131 wounded. The estimated economic cost was Rs 50,000 per day.[91] The riot had something of a manufactured quality to it, having been preceded by stagey processions by both Hindus and Muslims.[92] The *Hitavada* stated that 'the Hindus, who had anticipated a challenge from the Mahommedans, were not unprepared', and that certain areas of Nagpur were guarded by Hindu volunteers who were 'constantly patrolling the streets'.[93] This suggestion of RSS involvement is by no means denied in RSS literature:

> The warlike posture of Muslims sent shock-waves through the hearts of the Hindus. But a little over hundred young men of the Sangh were determined to protect the Hindu society. Anna Sohani had divided them into sixteen groups and stationed them in strategic places in different Hindu areas. As planned, Muslim goondas began abusing the Hindus and attacking them. However, they were in for a rude shock. Swayamsevaks, who were on the alert, repelled the attacks instantly. The Muslims were totally taken aback at this unexpected turn of events and found it hard even to make a get-away. Seeing the swayamsevaks repulsing the Muslims, other Hindus also felt emboldened and joined the fray—many of them barely dressed, some in their silk dhoti customarily worn during *pooja*![94]

Anna Sohani was a close associate of Hedgewar's, and his marshalling of the *swayamsevaks* is shown to have 'repulsed Muslim attacks'. It is possible that RSS involvement in the riot has been overemphasized in RSS literature—there is no mention of the organization, for example, in the

government communiqué on the matter—but certainly the occasion led to a higher profile for the organization. S.B. Warnekar commented that after the riot 'people looked to the RSS...with some hope'. Baparao Wharadpandey, another Nagpur *swayamsevak,* also recalled that the RSS expanded after the riot due to the spread of ideas about 'Hindu society as one entity'.[95]

An interesting feature of Deshpande and Ramaswamy's comment on the riot above is the reference to the involvement of Hindus 'in their silk dhotis'. This is preceded by an assertion that the Muslim 'plan' was to 'loot the Hindus belonging to the rich and middle classes'. For the RSS, then, this was not simply an occasion of low class slippage into anarchy and disorder. The 1927 riot is presented as an occasion when the middle classes, inspired by the actions of the *swayamsevaks,* began to fight back. Whether or not this was the case is difficult to establish, but the implication is clear: the RSS is presented as the embodiment of a middle class led *sangathan,* capable of defending itself and of teaching a few lessons in the process.[96] It is notable that in the wake of the 1927 riot *swayamsevaks* were invited to attend the Mahasabha Session at Ahmedabad, where another of Hedgewar's associates, Balaji Huddar, gave a speech that 'reflected the conquering zeal of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh'. 'This was how the leaders of the various provinces were introduced to the Sangh,' Deshpande and Ramaswamy comment, 'it was natural that all of them developed great warmth towards the Sangh.'[97]

This rapid popularization was underpinned by the steady expansion of the *shakha* network. By the beginning of 1929, there were eighteen *shakhas,* mostly in Nagpur and Wardha. By August that year the number had increased to thirty-four.[98] It is clear that Hedgewar perceived Nagpur as the centre of the Sangh, an example for expansion in other areas. He repeatedly emphasized this notion in letters, particularly during those periods when he was himself absent from Nagpur.[99] The strength of Nagpur then formed the basis for a methodical and controlled approach to expansion. By the early 1930s Hedgewar had instituted monthly reports to himself as a duty of all *shakha* leaders *(pramukhs).* The practice was instigated at a meeting in Nagpur of all *pramukhs* on 9 and 10 November 1929. The policy of *ekchalak anuvartita* (following one leader)—the central idea of RSS discipline—was evidently adopted at this meeting. The most significant act in the adoption of this policy is often cited as Hedgewar's formal assumption of the position of *Sarsanghchalak.*[100] Equally important, however, was the range of information *pramukhs* were required to bring to the meeting. This

included the precise size of their *shakha* and a profile of their *swayamsevaks;* the size of the town in which they operated, and the proportion of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in the town; and also the nature of any opposition to the Sangh in the area.[101] Hedgewar's power, it appears, was constructed on the basis of a precise knowledge of the nature and extent of the organization, and the environment in which it operated. Over the next few years Hedgewar's correspondence consistently refers to the maintenance of this flow of information, not only in relation to *shakhas* but also to functions and camps held in different regions, and festivals attended by *swayamsevaks.*[102]

This approach to knowledge is reminiscent of the zeal of the colonial bureaucracy, in the sense that knowledge operated as a key feature of the colonial image of order and organization. With this interesting linkage in mind, I will now examine in further detail the organizational models which underpinned the RSS structure as it emerged towards the end of the 1920s.

Organizational Models

In examining the emergence of the RSS organization, several models have been highlighted by scholars. One of the most persistent has been the *akhara,* a localized unit of young men which bears a strong resemblance to the *shakha.*[103] The *akhara* is most commonly associated with physical fitness gymnasiums and the art of wrestling but also with forms of cultural performance (theatre, music, poetry), medicine, and even 'the organizational structure used by mendicants'. Sandria Freitag has cited the *akhara* as a significant organizational form: 'A basic unit for mobilising for collective action of various kinds...*akharas* represented a potentially diverse and distinctly voluntary form of social organization.'[104] To some extent, *akharas* had a religious association, in that many included temples to Hanuman in their grounds.[105] It should also be noted, however, that particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century the *akhara* institution played an increasingly fluid role in popular organization, often being adapted as a means of gaining popular patronage by cultural practitioners who had previously received aristocratic or royal support. Such adaptations were given legitimacy by maintaining familiar structures as a feature of the organization, such as, for example, the teacher–disciple relationship.[106]

Certainly the way in which the RSS emerged confirms the connection between *akharas* and the *shakha* unit. Before the daily *shakha* was introduced in May 1926, Hedgewar encouraged his volunteers to attend an *akhara.*[107] Early *swayamsevaks* interviewed in relation to this project

all stated either that they had joined the RSS via an *akhara*, or that they had been attracted by the 'physical tricks' of *shakha* activity and viewed it as 'a new kind of *akhara*'.[108] This reflects very much the increased prominence of *akharas* as a feature of politics in the mid-1920s. Anderson and Damle note a leap in the number of *akharas* in Nagpur district over this period from 230 to 570.[109] It is also evident that the *sangathan* movement had to some extent encouraged the idea of *akhara* attendance as a feature of the revitalization of Hindu society.[110] Jaffrelot has noted the expansion of *akhara* activity in relation to the spread of extremist nationalism, and Freitag has noted the setting up of *akharas* as a feature of the Congress-led Municipal Board in Kanpur in the 1920s.[111] To some extent, then, the *akhara* had become entrenched as a feature of political life, if not a symbol of political intent, by the mid-1920s. With its implication of physical, or even quasi-military, preparation (the Kanpur *akharas* had been started 'to teach the art of warfare') this organizational form appears to have represented a counterpoint to the supposed passivity, or, as Ashish Nandy has suggested, femininity, of Gandhian *ahimsa* as a basis for mobilization.[112] In this context the adaptation of the *akhara* model in the RSS has a clear implication: it was an appropriate form for an organization which resisted the trajectory of Gandhian *ahimsa*.

Interestingly, however, other aspects of the Gandhian strategy evidently had their place as models of RSS organization, and this may be related to the argument developed in Chapter 5 concerning the emergence of a new discourse of organization in the 1920s. The volunteer model is perhaps the most immediate. It has been mentioned that Hedgewar took charge of a large body of volunteers at the 1920 Congress. Under the direction of Paranjpe, he supervised some of the work of the 1,200 strong force that managed the Congress *tamasha*.[113] The experience obviously had some impact on Hedgewar. As we have seen, when the *swayamsevaks* appeared in their first crowd management role at Ramtek in 1926, they were required to wear the same uniform as volunteers at the 1920 session. Earlier, when Hedgewar was appointed Joint Secretary of the Provincial Congress in 1922, he had attempted to raise a permanent, district-based volunteer force as part of the Congress. In doing so he faced some opposition and was unable to raise an effective force. Here, it appears, he confronted the indecision of the Gandhian Congress in relation to volunteers. Deshpande and Ramaswamy state that 'those who had taken the Gandhian vow of non-violence were basically opposed to such an organization'.[114]

As we have seen, the concept of volunteers was central to Gandhi's notion of *satyagraha*. Nevertheless the nervousness with which the elite leadership reconciled the volunteer corps with the strategy of non-violence led to a repeated misconception about the meaning of the corps in the context of mass mobilization. Because it was not related to the strategy of non-violence, the ideology of Hindu organization was able to appropriate the concept of disciplined volunteering without this kind of ideological anxiety. The volunteer concept perfectly reflected the desire to present Hindu society as a homogenous, coordinated unit, working in a dedicated and organized fashion. It was, in effect, the perfect vehicle for the articulation of *sangathan* as the salvation of Hindu society.

Part of the reason for this confluence between volunteering and *sangathan* was, ironically, the proximity of volunteering in the political discourse of the 1920s to the idea of *satyagraha*. It has been illustrated how Gandhian *satyagraha* was conceived as operating through a double layer of activists. Front-line *satyagrahis* were people who had taken the *satyagraha* oath and were prepared to break the law and fill prisons for the cause. These *satyagrahis* were ordinary people—peasants, workers, government servants, traders, etc.—who had been drawn into the movement for liberation. They were the lifeblood of the strategy of mass mobilization. Behind them were the full-time workers of Gandhian nationalism—the 'ideal *satyagrahis*' who not only managed the movement but practised *satyagraha* as a way of life. It was these workers who would effect, through their example, the process of *atmashuddhi*. As students of Truth, these workers were also *brahmacharis*, and celibacy was an important feature of their commitment. 'Those who want to perform national service,' Gandhi comments in 1916, 'or those who want to have a glimpse of the real religious life, must lead a celibate life, no matter if married or unmarried.'[115]

A double layer of activists is also evident in the RSS from an early date.[116] The *swayamsevaks* formed the front-line of RSS activity. They demonstrated their allegiance through daily attendance at the *shakha* as well as through an oath of allegiance, and were called upon to put in service to the Sangh as and when required. They remained, however, ordinary people with college, job, family, and other commitments. Behind them were the *pracharaks*, the full-time workers of the Sangh, who organized Sangh activities within a given area and provided guidance to all *swayamsevaks* within that area.[117] Again, *pracharaks* were presented as 'ideal' workers. They were wholly committed to the objectives of the Sangh, lived in Sangh accommodation, and remained unpaid. In addition, they generally remained unmarried and lived a life of celibacy.[118]

The *pracharak* ideal, then, is also replete with ideas of *brahmacharya*. Indeed, Gandhi is said to have appreciated this quality in Hedgewar,[119] although the *pracharak* ideal was generally perceived as a more conventional approach to *ashrama dharma* than that propagated by the Mahatma.[120]

From this comparison it may be seen that the basic structure of the RSS was drawn from standard nationalist idioms, developed in the broad context of the search for an elite-led strategy of mass confrontation with the state. Hedgewar's innovation was to use these idioms as a means of propagating the ideology of Hindu nationalism, whilst much of the Hindu nationalist movement from which he drew ideological inspiration remained wedded to the notion of symbolic representation. Hedgewar had been intimately involved in the Indian national movement, and his establishment and development of the Sangh must be seen in this context. In particular, it must be seen in the context of the new discourse of organization which had emerged as a result of the reconfiguration of nationalist strategy. What Hedgewar was doing was drawing on structures and idioms of political mobilization made available to him through this discourse.

Interestingly, the model of British-style bureaucratic organization also emerges in this context. As we have seen, after 1929, when the policy of *ekchalak anuvartita* was adopted, Hedgewar consistently pressed his associates to provide a regular flow of information to him in Nagpur on the status of the Sangh and its immediate environment. At the same time, local units of the Sangh were left to run themselves, under the guidance of the local *pracharak*. The strength of the Sangh organization, then, was based on the flow of knowledge from local to central points, whilst at the same time leaving local leaders to react to local situations, within the framework of Sangh ideology. As Jaffrelot has pointed out, this model meant that the idea of organization superseded any individual practitioner in the RSS; loyalty was owed to this organization (and its symbol, the *'guru'* of the RSS, the *Bhagwa Dhwaj,* or saffron flag), rather than to Hedgewar or his successors.[121] This model is reminiscent of the way in which colonial bureaucracy operated, because of the self-image of that bureaucracy as the representative of state organization, a symbol of order within the disorganized state of Indian society.[122] At the same time, however, it recalls Gandhi's emphasis on the organization, and volunteers as its constituent parts, as the real path to *swaraj*. As he said, Chauri Chaura could not have happened 'if the Congress and the Khilafat organizations were perfect. It is all a question of perfecting the organization'.

This argument is presented as a counterpoint to the image of the Sangh as based on semi-mystical/religious organizational models. Much academic work on the Sangh has emphasized these models as a reason for the Sangh's ability to sustain itself and expand its organizational base quite remarkably over the past seventy years. In particular, Christophe Jaffrelot characterizes the Sangh as a nationalist 'sect' *(sampradaya)* and *pracharaks* as ascetic *karma yogins.* His argument is that these traditional models were utilized by Hedgewar and later Golwalkar as 'a means of developing the sociological structure of an egalitarian, united nation'.[123] The *sampradaya* structure is presented here as 'the only system within Hindu society where an egalitarian form of individualism can be observed', and it is this form of individualism which is needed for the construction of the idea of nation. In this sense, Hedgewar is presented as appropriating this traditional structure as a means of strategically emulating the western individualistic values which underpin the nation concept.[124]

The immediate problem with this argument is the way in which it extracts the *sampradaya* structure from its wider context. Jaffrelot draws on Dumont's work to *oppose* the structure to the caste system, 'in so far as the first represents the domain of the individual and the second forms a holistic system in which the individual has no real place'.[125] This overlooks the fact that caste and *sampradaya* have complementary significance. They have integrated roles in the maintenance and change of Hindu socio-religious structures.[126] To extract the *sampradaya* structure from this equation as a societal model ignores the fact that this structure is inextricably linked into the wider societal model provided by the caste–*sampradaya* nexus.

A second problem with the argument derives from the agency invested in Hedgewar and Golwalkar as ideological architects of the RSS. Jaffrelot is forced into the position of presenting the first two *Sarsanghchalaks* as consciously manipulating traditional symbols in order to impute alien notions of nationality to a gullible public. Much as this may gratify the tendency of RSS ideologues to present their leaders as the sole source of inspiration for the movement, it can present only a limited, instrumentalist view of how ideologies are constructed and how they operate in the world. My point is that Hedgewar's project can only be given full meaning by placing it within the historical context of ideological and organizational development. The RSS was able to establish a presence in Nagpur and begin to extend it within Maharashtra precisely because it presented itself in the familiar idioms of nationalist organization. Naturally, this format meant that the same groups who had been the

driving force of the nationalist agitations of the early 1920s were influential in the development of the Sangh: i.e. the younger generation of middle class and lower middle class Hindus, disaffected from colonial government and eager to assert a self-confident sense of nationality. Evidence from oral accounts supports this through the assertion by most of the early *swayamsevaks* I interviewed that one of their principal reasons for joining the RSS was to be part of the national movement.[127]

The point illustrates the way in which the ideologies of Indian nationalism and Hindu nationalism still merged during this period. They emanated from the same middle class base and attracted the same middle class people as activists. The RSS in a sense increased this confluence because of its operation within the new discourse of organization which had emerged from the political dynamism of the early 1920s. It was nevertheless a resolutely Hindu nationalist organization, bringing all the attributes of the model of the horizontal organization of Hindu society into this new discursive arena.

Sangathan in RSS Ideology: Conceptualizing Hinduism and Hindu Society

The objectives of the RSS were drawn directly from the idea of *sangathan* as the horizontal organization of Hindu society. *Sangathan,* that is, not in Shraddhanand's sense but in the sense of a non-confrontational binding together of Hindu society, eschewing reform whilst at the same time encouraging respect for all castes as part of the 'organic' whole. As we have seen, whilst this idea was at the heart of the movement of the mid-1920s, an overall strategy for effecting *sangathan* was not developed because of the constrictions of the political discourse in which it was expressed. The development of the localized, volunteer-based structure of the RSS, however, created the opportunity for the elaboration of *sangathan* along these lines. This section will look at how this elaboration took place, by examining the relationship between this idea of *sangathan* and later RSS articulations of Hinduism and Hindu society.

In RSS ideology, the path to *sangathan* was perceived as a revitalization of the Hindu nation, through an awakening of consciousness: 'Awakening is knowledge and knowledge is the capacity to realise unity in diversity, to find harmony in place of conflict, and to worship society in the place of self.' It is important to realize that this process was seen as revitalizing what had previously existed:

> ...We believe that the present perversions and misconceptions are only a passing phase. Our cultural roots are too firm and too deeply struck into the springs of immortality to be easily dried up. They are bound to assert their age-old vigour

and vitality and throw out the parasitic growth of the past few centuries and sprout forth once again in all their pristine purity and grandeur.[128]

These passages, written by Golwalkar, reflect the elaboration of *sangathan* in a new discursive framework. The objective was to transform the fragmented state of the Hindu nation by breaking the shackles of 'foreign' domination. The cultural tradition of Hindu society was perceived as having an independent existence: it was just a case of guiding the people towards it. The RSS objective was to provide this guidance; *sangathan* meant transforming the consciousness of Hindu society in the same way as the counter-hegemonic pretensions of the Congress aimed to transform the consciousness of the Indian people. Similarly, what Jaffrelot describes as the RSS' 'sangathanist' method of organization was adapted from the Gandhian model of mass mobilization—transforming consciousness on a microcosmic level.[129]

How then, was consciousness to be transformed; what was the meaning, in other words, of RSS *sangathan?* The catholicity apparent in Savarkar's work, which as we have seen is implicitly associated with the idea of *sangathan,* was further developed by the RSS' self-image of cultural nationalism. Culture here is defined as 'a value system established through a long and intricate process of history', and based on the idea of *dharma. Dharma* is a 'moral principle of universal harmony' which governs processes of integration. Religion is part of this *dharma,* in the sense that it represents an individual's integration with God, but it is not the whole of *dharma.* The Hindu *rashtra,* in this conception, is a vision of *dharma* in a cultural, social and historical, but not religious sense. *Sangathan* relates specifically to the social aspect of *dharma.*[130]

Religion, then, is removed from the vision of an organized Hindu society, in a manner again reminiscent of Savarkar's *Hindutva.* It becomes a private concern, a matter of one's personal relationship with God.[131] This is a classic statement of the 'tolerance' of Hinduism, which draws on the universalist tendencies of *Advaita Vedanta.* It differs markedly from the reformism of the late nineteenth century—in particular the Arya Samaj, with its insistence on the Vedas as the source of all Truth.

This distinction is also apparent in the RSS attitude towards caste. Because of the restriction of religion as a private concern, caste becomes a social issue; it therefore comes within the self-proclaimed ambit of RSS concerns. The ideal Hindu *rashtra* is a casteless society, in which all Hindus are one, united as a kind of cultural brotherhood.[132] The Sangh is a reflection of this ideal, in that *shakhas* and camps do not officially recognize caste distinctions, and *swayamsevaks* are required to perform all tasks whilst in this environment.[133]

In consonance with the idea of horizontal organization, however, this attitude is not supported by a programme of reform in relation to caste. The attitude is rather described as 'erosion', a gradual process of change through the example of *swayamsevaks.*[134] In fact, Jaffrelot has noted that the idealized vision of a casteless society was supplemented by a defence of caste, based on the *dharmic* quality (i.e. in terms of social harmony) of the *varna* system.[135] This point is supported by Balasaheb Deoras, the third *Sarsanghchalak* of the Sangh, in a speech in Pune in 1974. Giving an account of the proliferation of castes on the basis of *varna vyavastha*, he stated:

> The whole society was visualised as a single living entity, personified into a magnificent figure with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. Such a glorious concept does not permit the perverse and ridiculous notion that the thighs are superior to the feet, hands are superior to the thighs or the head is superior to the hands. The idea is that all these limbs are equally essential for the proper functioning of society.[136]

This defence was tempered by the assertion that the system 'has to die and is already dying a natural death'. The policy of erosion was then cited by reference to the example of Hedgewar:

> I was present in the first Sangh camp. In that there were quite a number of Mahaar [untouchable] brethren. At the time of meals, some began hesitating to sit along with them. They had never before in their life sat for meals with the Mahaars. They placed their problem before Doctorji. But he did not enforce the discipline of the camp and ask them to get out. Doctorji simply said 'our practice is to sit together. We shall sit accordingly.' All of us sat together for meals. Those few that were hesitant sat in a separate line. But, for the next meals these very people came to Doctorji and apologized and sat with us of their own accord.[137]

Of course, if this incident did take place—and one has to be sceptical of the idea that 'quite a number of Mahaar brethren' took part in an early Sangh camp—the weight of peer group pressure on young minds needs to be taken into account in the process of erosion. Nevertheless it expresses the idea of non-confrontational example which is confirmed by other accounts.[138]

The Sangh, then, has developed an approach to Hinduism and reform which draws much from the horizontal approach to organization. It does not deny that society needs to be changed, but assumes that change is occurring 'naturally', as a feature of the homogenization of society. Caste identity, as it was explained to me, is being *replaced* by Hindu

identity. This is a fascinating idea, in that it side-steps the old dilemma of horizontal organization about how to consolidate Hinduism without disturbing caste; caste being perceived precisely as essential to Hindu identity. The RSS notion in effect presents an alternative organizing principle in Hindu society, in a manner similar to that noted as the function of the Arya Samaj's Mandirs: in this case the alternative is the RSS itself. As Vaidya states, the RSS 'is not an organization in society, but of society'; its objective is to be 'coterminous with Hindu society'.[139] The difference between this and the Arya Samaj's structural intervention is that the RSS organization does not confront caste in the same way, because it is not backed up by a radical, transformative ideology like that of Dayananda. Nevertheless it is something of an anomaly in the context of a horizontal approach to organization.

Ideologically, in fact, the RSS is quite flexible. It has the ability to appropriate powerful symbols and adopt different strategies as and when they are needed, without threatening its basic principles or sense of identity.[140] This is because it is based as much on a catholic sense of cultural inclusivism as it is on anti-Muslim exclusivism. This cultural inclusivism, having its roots in the idea of horizontal organization, was extended and developed because of the localized structures through which the RSS has worked, integrating itself into local cultural norms. It is these localized structures which broke the ideological link between horizontal organization and symbolic representation, and so for the first time opened up opportunities for the development of elite Hindu nationalist ideology as a strategy of mass mobilization, drawing on and accommodating microcosmic experiences of what it means to be a Hindu. On this basis the RSS developed its image as a cultural force removed from a primary involvement in politics. In most cases it has maintained this image, developing associate organizations to effect overt interventions in state-level politics. As an adjunct to this I would say that the Congress' own dislocation from questions of cultural development, cultural identity, resulted precisely from the elite leadership's continued concentration on this level of politics, stemming from its inability to carry through the counter-hegemonic strategy of the early 1920s. As a result it was unable to draw on or accommodate those same microcosmic experiences of identity—of what it meant, in this case, to be an Indian.

This is not to say, however, that the RSS has developed as a 'popular' or democratic organization as such. As we have seen, ideologically it is rooted firmly in the middle class, and its leadership, right down to *pracharak* level, has remained a high caste, middle class preserve.[141] This

is a reflection of the trajectory of Sangh ideology, emanating from this middle class, high caste base. Nevertheless, low caste mobilization has never been projected as the principal source of opposition for the Sangh; it could not, because, as I have indicated, low caste mobilization even in the 1920s operated on an entirely different discursive plane. In general, the Sangh finds it easier to encompass (in an ideological sense) than to oppose low caste movements. Neither does Islam form this opposition—of course it is strongly reviled and emerges as the most persistent Other in RSS ideology, but apart from in intensely communal situations, this Other is not an opposition—indeed, it is a key feature of the inclusivist Hindu identity. Rather, the principal opposition emerges as the 'pseudo-secularists' and 'territorial nationalists' of the Congress. The opposition is strongest precisely because of the discursive commonality of these singularly middle class forms of nationalism. Nothing illustrates this commonality more clearly than the ease with which the Sangh appropriated and developed organizational forms which had initially emerged as a mechanism for the realization of counter-hegemonic Indian nationalism.

Reviewing Approaches to the Organization of Hinduism

What we see in the 1920s, then, is a contrapuntal movement of ideologies on two interrelated levels of the organization of Hinduism.

First, on the level of religious imperatives—the way in which organization came to be articulated as an ideal to which Hindus should legitimately aspire—a convergence is evident. The tensions apparent in the opposition of horizontal and vertical approaches were consumed by the urgency of the time and particularly by the increasingly systematic appearance of the communal riot as a feature of modern politics. From 1923 onwards, the idea of a vertical restructuring of Hindu society, eradicating incipient oppressions through a radical transformation of the religion, became increasingly marginalized in the arena of Hindu politics. The unstructured catholicity of horizontal organization, particularly in its new formulation of *Hindutva,* now dominated the social vision of politically oriented Hinduism.

Second, at the level of political mobilization—the way in which Hindus became organized as a political force—a divergence is evident. The emergence of a new discourse of organization on the basis of forms of politics developed by the Gandhian Congress created the opportunity for new ways of being political in the public space. The divergent ways

in which the Mahasabha and the RSS established themselves during the 1920s is indicative of this new context in Indian politics. Although they developed with fairly similar notions of how the Hindu nation was to be conceptualized, then, their ideas about how to pursue this ideal—their comparative political strategies—were radically different. This is evident in the hostility of Hedgewar from a very early stage to suggestions from powerful figures within the Mahasabha, including his old mentor Dr Moonje, that the two organizations should be formally associated.[142] The resistance to Mahasabha overtures is notable in the context of the considerable financial difficulties which the Sangh experienced during its early period as it sought to establish itself on the basis of very limited contributions.[143] Affiliation with the larger, well-patronized Mahasabha would have alleviated these difficulties. The Sangh, however, was clearly set to plot a very different path. The difference may be schematized as follows:

	Strategy 1 (Mahasabha)	Strategy 2 (RSS)
Constituency of Hindus:	Represented symbolically	'Created' through transformation of consciousness
Addressed to:	The (colonial) state	The (Hindu) people
Form of politics:	Constitutional	Populist,'organic', cultural
Principal opposition:	Muslim League	Congress ('pseudo-secularists')

The Mahasabha continued to operate within the colonial discourse of organization, consolidating its position in relation to the state as the representative of 'the Hindus', a counterpoint to the Muslim League as the representative of 'the Muslims'. I have again described this position as a 'template of polarization', recalling the relationship between the Arya Samaj and Sanatana Dharma Sabhas in the public space in the late nineteenth century. The anonymity of the Mahasabha in post-Independence politics is indicative of the operation of this template, as the image of a counterweight to the Muslim League was of greatly reduced significance in domestic politics after the creation of Pakistan.

The RSS, on the other hand, articulated a strategy in the context of the emerging discourse of organization, separated from the colonialist–

nationalist nexus and distanced from the state. This was a populist, 'organic' form of politics in which middle class culture was able to express itself politically (i.e. away from the constrictions of state-led politics), and it is this culture which the RSS has been able to adapt, fashion, and exploit in the course of its gradual development into a politically significant bloc. Consistently, this form of politics has enabled the RSS to work towards expanding the constituency of Hindus (i.e. the Hindu nation) by transforming consciousness at a microcosmic level.

As it has expanded, the RSS has become involved in other discourses, other forms of politics. The advantage of ending this study in 1930 is that there is a clarity in the trajectory of both organizations, the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha. These established trajectories demonstrate the structure of elite-led politics, as India entered the most turbulent phase of its political history during the colonial period. The position of culture in this political structure is of particular significance. The dislocation of culture from politics in the 'constitutional' strategy represented by the Mahasabha only serves to emphasize its integration in the strategy represented by the RSS. The success of the RSS version of Hindu nationalism can be strongly related to this privileged position in terms of the ideological interpretation of culture. Developments in the discourses of organization in the 1920s, particularly on the basis of the increased sophistication of Indian nationalist strategy, were seminal in the establishment of the RSS at this level of elite-led politics.

Notes

1. B.P.S. Roy, the President of the National Liberal Foundation in the early 1940s, commented that 'the [Muslim] League and the Mahasabha are the two communal organizations running at a tangent and fighting for a share in political power.' See B.P.S. Roy, *Parliamentary Government in India* (Thacker, Spink & Co., Calcutta, c. 1943), p. 373.
2. See Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics* (Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha, Delhi, 1966), p. 42.
3. Quoted in Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan,* p. 107.
4. Ibid.: 'Only five gentlemen attended when the first preliminary meeting was held at Dehradun on 24 September 1914—and three of these belonged to Dehra Doon [*sic*] itself.'
5. Ibid., p. 109–10.
6. See Shraddhanand's dismissive attitude to the early years, *Hindu Sangathan,* p.114; See also Indra Prakash' two works, *Review of the History*

and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement (Akhil Bhartiya Hindu Mahasabha, Delhi, 1938), and *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to Indian Politics,* neither of which devotes much space to the Mahasabha before 1923.

7. Shraddhanand notes with satisfaction the removal of the 'loyalty' clause in the objectives of the Sabha at this Session, and its replacement by a clause committing the Sabha to the objective of a 'united and self-governing Indian nation': see *Hindu Sangathan,* p. 116.
8. Although Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics,* says Swami Shraddhanand was president this year, both R. Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress', p. 169, and Shraddhanand himself in *Hindu Sangathan,* p. 119, indicate that Malaviya presided.
9. From the Central Provinces, these developments drew interested but somewhat frustrated comment; of the resolution on organizational development, the *Karmavir* opines: 'It should not be allowed to remain on record only, but should at once be translated into action.' 13 January 1923, RIN CP&B No. 3 of 1923.
10. *Leader,* 2 April 1923.
11. Quoted in Prakash, *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha,* p. 86.
12. See *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha,* p. 25. Other sources are not explicit about the origin of the term: See Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* p.134; Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 20–2. Certainly the Multan riot prompted a rash of press statements on the need for Hindu organization. The *Vedic Magazine,* for example, an Arya monthly published in Lahore, commented in its September edition that 'the tragedy, deplorable as it is, has a lesson for its victims. Organise yourselves. Evolve unity in your own ranks. Develop strength, develop character'. See Punjab Press Abstracts, 1922, No. 40.
13. See Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 164.
14. For an account of Shraddhanand's struggle to put untouchability at the heart of the nationalist agenda and particularly his disagreements with Gandhi over the issue, see Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* pp. 142–7.
15. *Leader,* 7 February 1923; quoted in Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* p.131.
16. Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 164.
17. Shraddhanand, *Hindu Sangathan,* p. 1.
18. Ibid., pp. 78, 94.
19. Ibid., p. 103; 'The whole fabric of the Ashram Dharma,' he says,

> hinged on one pivot i.e. the brahmacharya. Until all the functions of the human organism were properly and rightly trained and a harmonious development of the physical body, the organs of action, the organs of sense, the mind, the intellect,

the memory and the ego was accomplished, the three later stages of human life could not work in unison with the laws of nature.

20. See ibid. *Grihastha dharma,* Shraddhanand states, means that 'the married couple should only cohabit for bringing forth healthy progeny. During the 25 years of married life they ought to procreate ten children only, a period of two and a half years being devoted to the nourishment of each child from the date of conception, during which period the couple should abstain from sexual intercourse.'
21. Ibid., p. 89.
22. Ibid., p. 85.
23. Ibid., p. 140.
24. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India,* pp. 142–3.
25. R.K. Ghai states that Rishi Ram was joined from the Punjab by Lala Khushal Chand; Ghai's text then suggests that they recruited other Aryas locally; see *Shuddhi Movement in India,* pp. 86–8.
26. An interesting counterpoint to the Arya approach in Malabar is provided by the Tinnevelly conversions of 1899, when the Shanars, a caste of toddy tappers, were converted to Islam. The Samaj sent two *updeshaks* to Tinnevelli but they failed to effect reconversion because of solid opposition of the local Brahmans. See H. Fischer-Tine, '"Kind Elders of the Hindu Biradri": The Arya Samajs Struggle for Influence and its Effect on Hindu-Muslim Relations 1880–1925' (Unpublished Conference Paper, Copenhagen, 1996). This comparison is cited, however, with the caution that there is obviously a vast difference between reclaiming a caste of toddy tappers and the converted Hindus of Malabar, who were largely drawn from high caste, landowning families.
27. J.R. Graham states that 'without the stimulus of the Arya Samaj, the orthodox would have done nothing towards readmitting the unfortunates.' See Graham 'The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism', p. 509. Thursby, however, could find no independent evidence to support this, and notes that the Madras government makes no mention of the Samaj in its report on the meeting of *pandits* in Calicut that eventually led to the reconversions; see *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 143, n. 50.
28. See Ghai, *Shuddhi Movement in India,* p. 87 for an account of the kind of ritual involved.
29. Both Graham ('The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism, p. 511, n. 1) and Thursby (*Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 144) state that the *Devala Smriti* was 'discovered' at this time. The credit for this 'discovery' was claimed by none other than B.S. Moonje. See his Presidential Speech to the 1926 All-India Shuddhi Sabha Conference, reproduced in *Hitavada,*18 April 1926; Moonje says that he discovered the *Devala Smriti* whilst 'studying the smritis that I could get hold of in

the libraries of Nagpur' after witnessing the problems of the Moplah converts in gaining readmission to Hinduism.

30. Fischer-Tine, 'Kind Elders of the Hindu Biradri', p. 12.
31. See Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 146.
32. *Leader* , 11 March 1923.
33. Although I have been unable to find any direct reference to it, Moonje implies in his Presidential Speech to the 1926 All-India Shuddhi Sabha Conference that the *Devala Smriti* was used as the basis of the purification ceremony in the Malkana campaign. See *Hitavada,* 18 April 1926.
34. See Sikand and Katju, 'Mass Conversions to Hinduism among Indian Muslims', p. 2216.
35. At a meeting of 'Benaras Sanatanists' in April 1923 'all spoke supporting the Malkana *Shuddhi* movement as allowed by the religious books and traditions of Sanatan Dharm'; see *Leader,* 30 April 1923.
36. Thursby, *Hindu–Muslim Relations in British India,* p. 153.
37. *Leader,* 8 August 1923; the full text of the resolutions reads:

    1. With a view to do justice to the so-called depressed classes in the Hindu community and to assimilate them as part of an organic whole in the great body of the Aryan fraternity, this conference of Hindus of all sects holds:
    a) that the lowest among the depressed classes be allowed to draw water from common public wells.
    b) that water be served to them at drinking posts freely as is done to the highest among other Hindus.
    c) that all members of the classes be allowed to sit on the same carpet in public meetings and other ceremonies with the higher classes and
    d) that their children (male and female) be allowed to enter freely and, at teaching time, to sit in the same form with other Hindu and non-Hindu children in government, national and denominational institutions.
    2. Looking to the splendid enthusiasm which has been aroused among the Hindu public in the work of reclamation of Malkana Rajputs and their entry into their brotherhood this conference decides once and for all that all such Neo-Muslims whether they be Rajputs or Brahmins, Vaishyas, Jat or Gujars etc., who have always conformed to the Hindu customs and rites be taken back into their several brotherhoods and be treated as Hindus for all intents and purposes.
    3. In view of the fact that an overwhelming majority of Indian Mahomedans and Christians are the descendants of Hindu converts and in view of the catholicity of the ancient Vedic Dharma which absorbed non-Aryans into the community—this conference resolves that non-Hindus converted by any sect of the Hindus according to the purification (prayashchit) rite prescribed by the representative body of that sect be considered Hindus to all intents and purposes by the whole Hindu community.

38. *Leader,* 24 August 1923.
39. *Leader,* 8 February 1924.
40. Ibid.

41. The later history of the *shuddhi* movement illustrates this, in the way that the purification of untouchables becomes increasingly subordinated to that of Christian and Muslim converts and in the way the focus of the movement has tended towards 'soft targets' among the latter. This tendency has been examined in a recent article , which links the *shuddhi* activity of the Arya Samaj to that of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in more recent years. The authors note that 'Muslim castes which have been particularly vulnerable to Hindu missionary efforts...are generally only nominally Muslim and still retain many Hindu customs and beliefs. Most of the mass conversions have occurred among Muslim Rajput groups'. Sikand and Katju, 'Mass Conversions to Hinduism among Indian Muslims', p. 2219. My argument here disputes the view taken by Walter Anderson that Sanatanists were alienated from the Mahasabha during the 1920s. He states that 'because of the strong reformist Arya Samaj inclination of the dominant group, the Sanatanists withdrew behind their own orthodox associations (i.e. Bharat Mahamandal)'. He offers no evidence to support this view. See his 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, II: Who Represents the Hindus?' in *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 7, no. 12, 18 March 1972, pp. 633–40: p. 634.
42. Moonje was particularly concerned to draw non-Brahmans into the Hindu Sabha; see Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province,* p. 100.
43. Moonje's Diary, 4 April 1927; Moonje Papers Reel 1 (NML).
44. *Liberator,* 23 September 1926, quoted in Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda,* p.156.
45. See Indra Prakash, Review of the *History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement,* p.183.
46. At the 1937 Mahasabha Session at Allahabad, held in the wake of Congress triumph in the first elections under the provisions of the 1935 Government of India Act, Savarkar concluded his first session as President by declaring that the Mahasabha was in a position 'similar to the position of the Congress 20 years ago when it passed pious resolutions. If Hindu voters voted at the next election for Hindu candidates standing on the ticket of the Mahasabha they would come into power'. Quoted in N.N. Mitra (ed.), *Indian Annual Register 1937,* vol. II (Annual Register Office, Calcutta, 1938), p. 422. This ambitious vision was of course far from fulfilled. As Anderson states, 'The Hindu Mahasabha...was never effectively organised nor did it ever seriously challenge the Congress for the support of Hindus.' See his 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, II', p. 635.
47. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India;* and also his 'The Idea of the Hindu Race in the Writings of Hindu Nationalist Ideologues in the 1920s and 1930s: A Concept between Two Cultures', in P. Robb

(ed.), *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Oxford University Press, 1995); G. Pandey, 'Which of Us are Hindus?'; Ram–Prasad, 'Hindutva Ideology: Extracting the Fundamentals', in *Contemporary South Asia,* vol. 2, no. 3, 1993, pp. 285–309.

48. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 25; Pandey, 'Which of Us are Hindus?', p. 242.
49. 'First Prospectus of the Banaras Hindu University', produced by M.M. Malaviya in March 1906. Reproduced in V.A. Sundaram (ed.), *Banaras Hindu University 1905–1935* (Benaras 1936), pp. ii–iii.
50. M.M. Malaviya, 'Banaras Hindu University: Why it is Wanted and What it Aims at', (n.d., Reproduced in ibid.), pp. 35–7. I have cited this document as produced in 1911 on the basis of a statement in the text as to the desire to have the foundations of the University laid 'in December next, in the happy and auspicious days when His Majesty, the King-Emperor will be in our midst'. (p.56). This is presumably a reference to the visit of George V during this year.
51. Announcement from the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal Head Office, Benaras, 31 July 1915; see Tilak Papers Reel 1 (Correspondence), (NML).
52. Savarkar, *Hindutva/Who is a Hindu?* (S.S. Savarkar, Bombay, 1989, 6th Edition; 1st Edition 1923), p. 33.
53. See D. Keer, *Veer Savarkar* (Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1988), pp. 93–8.
54. Reproduced in Savarkar, *Hindutva,* pp. iii–iv.
55. As Swami Shraddhanand commented somewhat grandiosely: 'It must have been one of those Vedic dawns indeed which inspired our Seers with new truths, that revealed to the author of "Hindutva" this "Mantra", this definition of Hindutva!!'; quoted in ibid., p. vii.
56. Although it should be noted that Savarkar claimed to have introduced a *shuddhi* ceremony and persuaded other prisoners to accept his definition of Hindu whilst in Andaman; see Savarkar, *My Transportation for Life* (S.S. Savarkar, Bombay, 1984), pp. 316–23.
57. See Savarkar, *Hindutva,* p. 45.
58. Ibid., p. 89.
59. The second formula being *Pitribhumi–Punyabhumi*, or fatherland–holy land; see ibid., pp. 102–16.
60. Ibid., p. 85: Savarkar is addressing an imaginary sceptic who expresses the 'not unoften interested objection that carpingly questions "but are you really a race? Can you be said to possess a common blood?"'
61. The system of *Anuloma* and *Pratiloma;* see ibid. For an explanation of these concepts, see Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India;* pp. 20–1.
62. Savarkar, *Hindutva,* p. 88.
63. Ibid., p. 86.

64. Ibid., p. 27.
65. Ibid., pp. 42–4.
66. Ibid., p. 141.
67. This is not to say, however, that Savarkar was unconcerned with the plight of low castes and particularly untouchables. He was, for example, actively engaged in work with untouchables during the period after his release in 1924 when he was confined to Ratnagiri. In particular, he worked to increase untouchable access to government-maintained schools; see Miscellaneous Correspondence 1925–37, Savarkar Papers Reel 22, (NML).
68. Savarkar, *Hindutva,* p.1.
69. See Keer, *Veer Savarkar,* p. 162.
70. On the post-Independence electoral performance of the Mahasabha, see Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 107–13. Also, Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, II', p. 635, notes that:'RSS members have frequently told the author that the Hindu Mahasabha was a collection of rich talukdars and zamindars with no real organization capable of defending Hinduism.'
71. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India;* Pandey, 'Which of Us are Hindus?'; T. Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993); Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron;* D.R. Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*; W. Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, I: Early Concerns', in *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 7, no. 11, 11 March 1972, pp. 589–97; J.A. Curran, *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics: A Study of the RSS* (Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1951). In addition, there is a large body of RSS-sponsored literature that perpetuates a hagiographic view of the organization's development. I have referred to two of these accounts fairly extensively: K.R. Malkani, *The RSS Story* (Impex India, New Delhi, 1980); and Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker.*
72. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 43–5.
73. H.V. Seshadri describes the *Sarsanghchalak as* the 'guide and philosopher of the Sangh'; see his *RSS: A Vision in Action* (Jagarana Prakashana, Bangalore, 1988), p. 321. Hedgewar became *Sarsanghchalak* in 1929.
74. Deshpande and Ramaswamy state that Hedgewar first worked for Moonje during the 'Paisa Fund' agitation of 1901; later, after taking his matriculation he stayed with Moonje and the latter was influential in his decision to enrol at the National Medical College in Calcutta; see *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* pp. 7, 15.
75. D.R. Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh,* p. 59, cites the five original members as Moonje, Paranjpe, Tholkar, Babarao Savarkar (Vinayak Damodar's elder brother), and Hedgewar. See also Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags,* p. 16.

76. See, for example, Moonje's Diary 1927: entries on 4 May, 4 June, 11 June, 13 June; Moonje Papers Reel 1 (NML).
77. Hedgewar's high profile organizational work at the Nagpur Congress (see below) was overseen by Paranjpe—see Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, I', p. 591; his involvement with Moonje, as stated, was long established, but the particular model of 'leader' and 'stormtrooper' developed after the establishment of the Nagpur Hindu Sabha in 1923, and the subsequent violence at Ganesh Peth: see Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh,* p. 49; in relation to this, it is interesting to note that the *swayamsevak* and former prominent *pracharak* Vasant Rao Oke, who joined the Sangh in 1926, recalled how he first came to know of Hedgewar through the latter's confrontational strategy of supervising the playing of music before mosques—the issue, of course, which sparked the Ganesh Peth riot; interview with Oke, 16 December 1995.
78. There were in fact two annual *melas* at Ramtek: the April mela was far smaller than the fifteen day long main event in November. Interestingly, Ramtek's religious significance derives from a story of assertive low caste devotion to Ram. Ram was said to have visited the site in order to cut off the head of a Shudra named Shambuka who had so upset the natural order of things by practising Brahman-style austerities that he caused the death of a Brahman's son. Whilst accepting his fate as an honour, Shambuka 'prayed to Rama that he would abide forever at Ramtek. ...So Rama took up his abode on the hill, and the Shudra was turned into a *linga* over which the temple of Dhumreshwar Mahadeo was built'. See *Central Provinces District Gazetteers, Nagpur District,* A Volume (1908), p. 331.
79. Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 35; this role was confirmed by Vasant Rao Oke, who recalled that Swayamsevaks 'went together by bicycle to Ramtek to manage the *yatra.*'
80. See Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, I', p. 593; and Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 35, n. 55.
81. Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 35; again supported (undemonstratively) by oral evidence from Oke.
82. During Partition, for example, the RSS was active in relief work for refugees from the newly created Pakistan. Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, II', p. 638, notes that this not only enhanced the Sangh's reputation, but also directly assisted its expansion: 'As the refugees spread out over northern and western India, they took the RSS with them and served as the membership nucleus for new shakhas.'
83. 28 May 1926; see Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* p. 83.
84. Evidence from Vasant Rao Oke, who joined the Sitabaldi *shakha* in 1926.

85. N.B. Lele, interviewed 20 January 1996, explained that he joined the RSS as one of 'a dozen students' in his home town of Jalgaon in Maharashtra after a visit from one of Hedgewar's associates in 1934.
86. Quoted in M.S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Vikram Prakashan, Bangalore, 1966), p. 368; also recalled by K.S. Sudarshan, former joint General Secretary of the RSS, in Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags,* p. 16.
87. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts,* p. 334; Jaffrelot has pointed to this aspect of the *shakha* as evidence of the Sangh's projection of an imagined community, in the manner described by Benedict Anderson as a key feature of nationalist consciousness; see *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 64.
88. Interview with S.B. Warnekar, 22 April 1996.
89. See Goyal, R*ashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh,* p. 60; Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags,* pp. 16–7; for an opposing view, see Curran, *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics,* p. 11.
90. Diary 11 June 1927, Moonje Papers Reel (NML); also see his press statement in *Hitavada,* 17 July 1927.
91. *Hitavada,* 11 September 1927.
92. See Local Government Communiqué on the riot, published in *Hitavada,* 13 September 1927.
93. *Hitavada,* 8 September 1927.
94. Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* p. 95–6.
95. Interview with Baparao Wharadpandey, ex-Nagpur *pracharak,* in Nagpur, 21 April 1996; interview with Warnekar, 22 April 1996; Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* pp. 96–7, comment: 'After the riot the name of the Sangh as well as its founder Doctor Hedgewar spread throughout the length and breadth of Central Provinces.'
96. Wharadpandey, Oke, and Warnekar all commented that after the 1927 riot, the Nagpur Muslims 'did not cause trouble again'.
97. Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* p. 97.
98. Hedgewar to Dadar Paramarth 21 August 1929, Hedgewar Letters, no. 5 of 1929.
99. See for example, Letter, nos 1, 5, 6 of 1929, no. 2 of 1931.
100. See, for example, Anderson, 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh', p. 593.
101. Circular letter, Hedgewar to all *pramukhs,* 1 Nov. 1929, Hedgewar Letters, no. 9 of 1929.
102. See, for example, Letter to Nilkantrao Sadaphal 24 April 1932, no. 7 of 1932, and to Balasaheb Dani 13 August 1933, no. 44 of 1933.
103. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 35; Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 35; J. Alter, 'Somatic Nationalism: Indian Wrestling and Militant Hinduism', *Modern Asian Studies,* vol. 28, no. 3, 1994, pp. 557–88.

104. See S. Freitag (ed.), *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance and Environment, 1800–1980* (University of California, 1989), pp. 120–1.
105. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 35.
106. See Freitag, *Collective Action and Community,* p. 122; I emphasize this partly in reaction to Jaffrelot's citing of the teacher–disciple relationship as a feature of the religious significance of the *akhara* form, which I believe is overemphasized.
107. Malkani notes that 'Most of them went to Anna Khote's Nagpur Vyayamshala'. *The RSS Story,* p. 15.
108. V.R. Oke and B. Wharadpandey joined via *akharas;* S.B. Warnekar and M.G. Vaidya (interviewed 22 April 1996) were attracted by the physical exercises; N.B. Lele recalled that he and his friends saw the RSS as 'a new kind of *akhara*'.
109. Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 35; Nagpur district had by far the largest concentration of *akharas* in the Central Provinces and Berar—the figures for the whole area over the period are 466 in 1921 and 1338 in 1931, see *Census of India 1931,* vol. XII, Central Provinces and Berar, Pt. 1: Report (Government Printing, Nagpur, 1933), p. 296.
110. Shraddhanand included an *akhara* as a necessary feature of his Rashtra Mandirs—see *Hindu Sangathan,* p. 140; it is also interesting to note that in the context of the Ganesh Peth tension in 1923, the *Pranavir* called for the construction of a temple to Ganesh in the area, to include a branch office of the Mahasabha and an *akhara* in its grounds—see *Pranavir,* 29 November 1923, RIN CP & B No. 49 of 1923.
111. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 36; Freitag, *Collective Action and Community,* p. 225.
112. See Jaffrelot's comments and citation, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 46.
113. Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 31.
114. Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* p. 66.
115. 'Speech on Ashram Vows', at the YMCA Madras, February 1916; quoted in R. Iyer, *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1991), p. 286.
116. N.B. The first *pracharaks,* the 'higher' level of activists, were appointed out of the first Officer Training Camp in Nagpur in 1927.
117. This idea of a double layer refers to the activist manifestation of the organization. The Sangh also has a hierarchical structure of command (in the same way as the Gandhian Congress had a structure of command, although of a somewhat different nature). For a full picture of the RSS organization, see Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* pp. 84–9.

118. Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 88; also Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 40, 43.
119. The Mahatma's visit to the Sangh camp at Wardha in 1934 is recalled in Anonymous, *RSS: Spearheading National Renaissance* (Prakashan Vibhag, Bangalore, 1985), p. 15:

> The spirit of rigorous simplicity and self-sacrifice of the swayamsevaks in bearing the entire burden of the organizational expenses...had especially impressed Gandhiji. And when he came to know that Doctorji had neither taken to any profession not to a married life, he exclaimed 'Ah, that explains the remarkable degree of your success in such a short time'.

120. Anderson and Damle note that although becoming a *pracharak* was theoretically a lifelong commitment, many 'intended to sacrifice several years of their lives for the nation and then fulfil their duties as a householder.' See *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 88.
121. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 62–4.
122. Baparao Wharadpandey stated in an interview that the basic model used by Hedgewar to promote organization was the British; he 'never criticised the British' because of this awareness of the 'organization of British society.'
123. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 45.
124. Ibid., p. 44.
125. Ibid., p. 43.
126. See Eschmann, 'Religion, Reaction and Change', esp. pp. 111–13.
127. Oke, Wharadpandey, and Warnekar all stated this as an important reason for their joining the RSS. N. B. Lele, who joined somewhat later in 1934, was not attracted by Indian nationalism, saying that because of his commitment to the Sangh he had 'no time' for politics. Indeed, as an active *swayamsevak* in Bombay in the late 1930s, he recalled that he faced opposition from Congress workers who perceived RSS members (wrongly, Lele emphasized) as working on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha.
128. M.S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts,* pp. 29, 32.
129. This Gandhian strategy was to give way in the Congress to the 'aggregationist' strategy, as that body withdrew from the mass implication of counter hegemony; see Jaffrelot, 'The BJP in Madhya Pradesh: Networks, Strategies and Power', in Pandey, *Hindus and Others,* pp. 110–45: p. 111.
130. This paragraph is based on an interview with the RSS *Baudhik Pramukh* Baburao M.G. Vaidya on 22 April 1996. Quotations are direct transcripts from this interview.
131. Vaidya goes as far as to decry the notion of *punyabhu,* or holy land, as a qualifying stipulation of Hindu nationality. 'It is not essential', he says, and Christians and Muslims can 'become Hindu' as long as they accept the notion of Hindu society.

132. The maleness of RSS ideology is, of course, always already assumed as a central feature of 'traditional Hindu society'; Hedgewar, for example, often referred to the importance of the Nagpur Sangh as the 'father' of the organization; Circular Letter, Hedgewar to all *pramukhs* 1 Nov. 1929, Hedgewar Letters, No. 9 of 1929; for an interesting account of the position of women within this ideology, see Tanika Sarkar, 'Women's Agency within Authoritarian Communalism: The Rashtrasevika Samiti and Ramjanmabhoomi', in Pandey, *Hindus and Others,* pp. 24–73.
133. Anderson and Damle note that participants in Officer Training Camps 'are required to take their turn at cleaning the latrines, sweeping and other "defiling" activities'. See *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 95. This is another feature of the Wardha camp which Gandhi is supposed to have warmly approved in 1934: see Deshpande and Ramaswamy, *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker,* pp. 146–50.
134. The process was explained to me in these terms by M.G. Vaidya.
135. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 45.
136. B. Deoras, *Social Equality and Consolidation* (Jagarana Prakashana, Bangalore, 1974), p. 9.
137. Deoras, *Social Equality and Consolidation,* p. 13.
138. For example, Bapurao Wharadpandey recalled 'persuading' other *swayamsevaks* that commensality was the way forward: 'It was the logical step from the idea of one Hinduism.'
139. Interview with M.G. Vaidya.
140. This is a point which Jaffrelot's book repeatedly makes.
141. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 45; Anderson and Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 88: 'The typical *pracharak is* recruited in his early twenties. He is well educated, usually a college graduate. He is fluent in English and Hindi, besides the language of the area in which he works. Most of those we met were science graduates. He tends to come from an urban middle-class, upper-caste background.'
142. V.D. Savarkar suggested in 1929 that the RSS should become part of the Mahasabha. Hedgewar rejected the suggestion outright, and when Savarkar persisted he 'cut all ties with the Sabha.' In 1932, Hedgewar rejected overtures from Moonje on the same issue, causing a split between the two. See Baker, *Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province,* p. 106. Jaffrelot, however, demonstrates that the two organizations maintained some degree of contact during the 1930s, with tension arising only in the context of these Mahasabha attempts to absorb the Sangh. After Golwalkar became *Sarsanghchalak* in 1940, a complete break was effected. See *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* pp. 72–4.
143. This is persistently evident in Hedgewar's letters. See, for example, Letter No. 5 of 1929, Hedgewar to Dadar Paramarth, 21 August 1929; No. 51 of 1932, Hedgewar to Bhaiya Saheb Tatade, 2 December 1932.

7

Conclusion

Hindu nationalism emerged from the 1920s as an established feature of modern Indian politics. Its presence is clear in an institutional sense, in the form of the Mahasabha and other organizations, including the RSS.[1] It is also clear in an ideological sense, as it blended and clashed with Indian nationalism in the Congress and in the 'mental frameworks' of politically aware Hindus. The discrete lines of development towards this situation, always a problematic feature of modern Indian history, have been the subject of this book. I have argued that Hindu nationalist ideology was formulated by middle class elites in the context of certain projections of colonial hegemony and the complimentary elaboration of a kind of 'quasi-polity' as a feature of colonial control. In particular, I have suggested that the state's self-image of organization was enormously influential; that, in fact, a specific discourse was developed on this basis which attempted to set the parameters of political expression in the colony. Hindu nationalism emerged gradually within these parameters, as Hindus sought to articulate their 'Hinduness' through this discourse of organization.

The discourse became an imperative for middle class Hindus in particular, because of its projection as a discourse of modernity, to be contrasted with what was seen as the disorganized 'pre-modernity' of Indian society. The Hindu religion was appropriated as a key feature of this projection. Indeed, it developed a dual meaning, reflecting the contrast between organization and disorganization. On the one hand it was a great religious system, defined by its 'essential' ancient texts. This system was perceived as an appropriate element of the modern, organized rule of law that the colonial state purported to represent. On the other

hand, it was a stagnant jungle, both cause and symptom of what was seen as the disorganized, anarchic state that Indian society would quickly lapse into if British power—that edifice of organization and order—were withdrawn. These images underpinned the need to establish Hinduism as a modern religious system. At the same time, certain forces—initially missionaries and Hindu reformers, and progressively census officials and incipient low caste movements—drew attention at the fuzziness, the lack of definition, which characterized the boundaries of Hinduism. This was particularly so in relation to the issue of low castes, untouchables, and *adivasis*—what might be termed the 'underbelly' of modern Hinduism. The question was persistently asked as to who amongst these groups could be safely identified as Hindu, and who as not Hindu.

The organization of Hinduism emerged in the context of this persistent questioning. The idea of consolidating the religion, of firming up these boundaries, developed along two principal paths. First, the vertical restructuring of the religion, eradicating manifest oppressions through a complete overhaul of what it meant to be Hindu. Implicitly, this would entail the deconstruction of caste as a central feature of Hindu identity. Second, the horizontal binding together of the various strands of religiosity and caste identity in the name of a composite catholicity and tolerance. Whereas the first path presented itself as an act of reform, the second appeared to be little more than a symbolic act of will—unity and consolidation being conferred through a kind of collective imagining. Ironically, this comparative theoretical weakness strengthened the position of horizontal organization, because of the nature of the discourse within which both approaches operated. It was a discourse which naturally favoured a symbolic approach to issues of political significance. The idea of an organized Hinduism nevertheless developed through the dynamic relationship of these two positions, culminating in the ascendance of horizontal organization after the Mahasabha sessions of 1923 and 1924.

One consequence of this identification of divergent approaches has been the disruption of the idea of a direct historical link between the reform movements that developed in the nineteenth century—particularly the Arya Samaj—and Hindu nationalism. The Samaj has been presented as the key advocate of vertical restructuring as the means of effecting the organization of Hinduism. It has been illustrated that at the level of ideology, the core values of the Arya Samaj which informed this approach diverged from the emergent milieu of Hindu nationalism. The Samaj as a reform movement was structured by Dayananda as having

a transformative role in Hinduism. This role was projected through two central features of Arya ideology: first, the assertion that certain texts constituted the fixed canon of the Hindu faith; and second, the attempt to undermine caste as the central institution of Hinduism, to be replaced by an idealized, merit-based *varna* system. The Samaj was confronted with the dilemma of how to work towards these objectives whilst remaining a part of the very structure that it sought to repudiate. Increasingly, the objectives of the Samaj were compromised by this dilemma.

The *shuddhi* movements of the early 1920s, and the concomitant articulation of *sangathan,* brought this situation to a head. During this critical period, the central ideology of the Arya Samaj was unable to assert its hegemony over the wider movement. Instead it was drawn into the idea of organization as an overriding objective. *Sangathan* emerged as a catholic, horizontal unity, based on the perceived tolerance of the Hindu tradition and the theoretical equality of castes and their functions in society.

This is not to say that the Arya Samaj did not contribute to the development of Hindu nationalism. It brought considerable expertise and experience in terms of disseminating propaganda, and the extensive network of local Samajs in the north was an invaluable source of support for campaigns such as the Malkana *shuddhi.* The Samaj also produced some important advocates of the organization of Hinduism—most notably Lal Chand and Swami Shraddhanand—and later supplied leaders to the Mahasabha such as Bhai Parmanand. Even in terms of ideology, the Samaj undoubtedly created sustained pressure within the Mahasabha for the extension of uplift programmes and other progressive initiatives. But the core of Arya ideology—the transformative values which defined it as a reform movement—were persistently rejected by emergent Hindu nationalism.

This is important because it counteracts the representation of Hindu nationalism as an extension of the reformist approach to Hindu religion, with its attendant baggage of 'purifying' Hindu practice. The search for the antecedents of Hindu nationalism has focused too sharply on revivalism as a product of this reformist approach. The real point of significance is the middle classness of this approach to Hinduism—whether it be reformist or non-reformist.

In consonance with this approach, the articulation of ideas of organization has been demonstrated in a series of religious and political bodies and movements. The Arya Samaj, certainly, but also the Sanatana Dharma Sabhas and the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal; the cow

protection movement of the early 1890s; the *shuddhi* movement; the Hindu Sabha movement; the Hindu Mahasabha and the *sangathan* movement; and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh—all these have been examined as examples of different approaches to the organization of Hinduism. This is not an exhaustive list; such organizations as the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Theosophical Society, as well as numerous smaller organizations, all contributed to the debate about the nature and extent of Hinduism and its position in colonial polity.[2] I have examined organizations and movements on the basis of their centrality in the debate and their contribution to the development of Hinduism as a political force.

It has been argued that the nature of these bodies and movements was configured by the dominant discourse of organization. Even movements which clearly had an existence outside of this discursive arena, such as the cow protection movement in the early 1890s, were represented principally as manifestations of Hindu consolidation within this arena. The Sabha movement of the early twentieth century formalized this position through its explicit linking of horizontal organization to the notion of symbolic representation. The strength of this linkage meant that developments apparent in the Indian National Congress towards a more palpable form of representation—through the strategy of counter-hegemony—were resisted strongly in organizations that represented this sense of Hindu identity. This is evident in the perceived 'loyalism' of the Mahasabha (a more complex position than simple reactionary conservatism, as it has often been presented) in the 1930s and 1940s.

The political context of the 1920s, however, did change this situation. The emergence of the RSS signified a break in the link between horizontal organization and symbolic representation. Models of organization drawn from the national movement provided the RSS with a recognizably modern form in the political arena of the 1920s, enabling it to establish its position amongst politically active middle class Hindus. The trajectory of the RSS was singular, in that it eschewed the idea of symbolic representation altogether, aiming instead to 'create' its constituency in the emergent discourse of organization, removed from the centrality of the colonialist–nationalist nexus. Despite the gradualism inherent in this trajectory, I have nevertheless argued that this was a radical departure in the history of middle class Hindu politics, because it signified the re-articulation of the Hindu nation at a new, non-symbolic level. The difficulties inherent in this re-articulation are evident in the organization's attitude towards *sangathan* and the development of Hindu society. The RSS has mainitained an approach to these issues based on horizontal

organization. At the same time, the logic of its trajectory within Hindu politics has led it to introduce the idea of an alternative to caste as an organizing principle in Hindu society. This organizing principle is the Sangh itself. At an ideal level, then, the RSS pursuit of Hindu *sangathan* implies the rejection of caste, a view of Hindu society which is the antithesis of horizontal organization. It is perhaps a reflection of the ideal nature of the Hindu nation itself that this dichotomy is not perceived as problematic in RSS ideology.

It is interesting to note that in his preface to Indra Prakash's *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sanghatan Movement,* written in 1938, V.D. Savarkar refers to *sangathan* as a movement that incorporates a whole host of organizations working towards the common goal of consolidation. 'All these Hindu Sanghatanist institutions,' he says, 'even though they are not formally affiliated to each other, are still allied with one another in the common cause. All of them aim at the regeneration of the Hindu Race, moulding it into a free and mighty Hindu Nation.'[3] The Mahasabha is perceived as the leading institution but it is still part of the wider *sangathan* movement, the movement towards nationhood. This is something of a shift from the articulation of *sangathan* in the 1920s, where the movement was perceived as a project sanctioned and supervised by the Mahasabha, in the same manner as the Malkana *shuddhi* campaign.

The shift reflects the significance of the idea of *sangathan* in the ideology of Hindu nationalism. By the late 1930s, it had become the common denominator of a group of organizations (including, of course, the RSS) which operated in the name of Hindu nationalism. This centrality is indicative of the defining importance of the idea of organization in the development of the ideology. From the late nineteenth century onwards, middle class Hindus, responding to a variety of pressures, were increasingly drawn into the political representation of their Hinduism on the basis of ideas of organization. In particular, these ideas defined the parameters of a constituency of Hindus—a constituency which required representation in the rapidly developing political arena. As representation became a key battlefield in the struggle between the state and Indian nationalism in the early twentieth century, this constituency of Hindus gained prominence as a counterpoint to Indian nationalists' attempts to reify their own constituency. As well as reiterating the value of symbolic representation, the Morley–Minto reforms' incorporation of separate electorates implicitly recognized this constituency of Hindus as a politically significant bloc. Coterminously, the Hindu Sabha developed as a means of projecting the constituency and the idea of the

nation emerged gradually as an appropriate symbol of its aspirations. In this sense, then, organized Hinduism as it was debated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries set the parameters for the conceptualization of the Hindu nation. The strident articulation of Hindu nationalism in the 1920s was hence less of a revelation than has at times been suggested in academic accounts.

This use of the nation concept, indeed, is further indication of the proximity of Hindu nationalist ideology to that of elite-led Indian nationalism. These two ideologies operated with the same set of discursive tools and the same range of political strategies, even though they remained distinct in terms of their objectives and their interpretations of Indian culture. This argument is supported by the fact that organization was also a significant factor in the development of elite-led Indian nationalism. Indeed, it may be said that it was also expressed initially within the colonial discourse of organization. Because of its grounding in an economic critique of colonialism, however, it had a far more progressive trajectory in relation to this discourse. Developments in the way of being political in the colonial public space were driven by the increasing challenge of elements within the national movement to what was perceived as colonial hegemony. Middle class nationalists like Tilak assumed that key elements within Indian society—most notably landowning peasants—were dominated by the hegemonic influence of the state. As a result, these nationalists were increasingly committed to ideological struggle, or counter-hegemony, as the central strategy of confrontation with the state. My point is that regardless of the objective effectiveness of this nationalist counter-hegemony, it has to be recognized as the emerging strategy of the Indian national movement in the early twentieth century. As a strategy, furthermore, it began to shift the parameters of political discourse which occupied both middle class nationalists and the state at this time. Ultimately, this discursive challenge eroded the power of the colonial discourse of organization, leading to the development of a new, alternative (but still elite-controlled) discourse in the 1920s.

These developments were significant for the ideology of Hindu nationalism, precisely because of its proximity to that of Indian nationalism in terms of discourse and strategy. Hindu nationalism benefited from the Congress' challenge to state hegemony, initially through the state's encouragement of an alternative to the Congress as an appropriate representative of 'Hindu opinion' (in the sense implied by symbolic representation) and later through the development of a new discourse of organization to challenge that of the state. As we have seen, the latter

liberated Hindu nationalist ideology from its strong relationship with the colonial discourse. Ironically, it was henceforth able to deploy its interpretation of culture on a far more effective, resonant plane.

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The issues raised in this book are connected to the problem of the representation of religion and culture in colonial politics. I have focused on this problem as it was manifested in the ideologies produced by one particular class: the middle class. In terms of the dominant ideologies of modern political discourse, I have argued that the middle class has been an important social bloc. This importance derives from the position of this middle class in relation to the colonial state and its limited hegemonic project in India. Unquestionably, this was a privileged position which the middle class utilized to effect its own bid for hegemony in the emerging arena of colonial politics. In making this bid, the middle class attempted to encapsulate the religion and culture of those over whom it claimed hegemony—the ideologies which were produced have had an enduring impact in terms of the character of post-colonial politics.

To say that this class had an ideological position, however, is to misconstrue the class–ideology relationship. As Gramsci stated, classes are more often than not cross-cut by various, often conflicting ideologies, and this was certainly the case with the middle class in colonial India. This book demonstrates how the ideologies of Hindu and Indian nationalism contested the terrain of middle class consciousness, often in a non-explicit manner. Both these ideologies claimed to represent the interests of vast, amorphous constituencies: the Indian nation, the Hindu community, and, progressively, the Hindu nation. Within the colonial discourse of organization, the coexistence of these projected constituencies was less problematic. As the Congress began to challenge the forms of the discourse, however, by extending its structure and increasing the participation of the people whom it claimed to represent, the opposition between these ideological positions was more manifest.

The crucial developments in this direction, which occurred in the early 1920s, produced opposition but did not effect ideological polarization. Congress drew back from the full implementation of its strategy of mass mobilization because it was unable, ideologically, to accommodate the well-developed political positions of subaltern elements. Reiterating Guha, the Congress 'failed to assimilate the class interests of peasants and workers effectively into a bourgeois hegemony'.[4] This drawing back was critical in two ways: first, it created space for the development of a 'decentred' politics on the basis of the new discourse of organization, as noted in Chapters 5 and 6; second, it left the Congress

itself in two worlds, oscillating between the two discourses, as it were—the one directed towards the state, the other directed towards the people. This oscillation was to characterize the strategy of the Congress leading up to independence; it has also influenced the operation of Congress as a party in post-colonial politics. It may be useful to look at the 'aggregationist' mode of politics so effectively employed by the Congress, for example, as indicative of the continued importance of the colonial discourse of organization. Certainly the idea of 'vote banks', where political parties recruit the support of local notables whose followers vote according to their instructions, appears to echo the key principles of symbolic representation and imagined constituencies in a democratic framework.

Oscillation between the two discourses is also a major reason for the Congress' inability to effectively combat the ideology of Hindu nationalism. The 1920s, as I have said, did not represent ideological polarization despite the posturing of the Congress on the issue of communal violence. This was precisely because of the Congress retreat on the strategy of mass mobilization, which meant that its representation of the people maintained a strong symbolic element. Only by attempting to reify its constituency (i.e. the Indian nation) fully, would it have come into direct opposition with the Hindu nation as a constituency. As it was, and is, the coexistence of the two ideologies even within the Congress organization remained largely unproblematic.

This is not to say, however, that there was no polarization during the 1920s. What I have said is that there was no ideological polarization, that ideologies continued to coexist in a relatively unproblematic manner. There was nevertheless a new dialectic in Indian politics which is closely related to the ideologies of Hindu and Indian nationalism: the dialectic between communalism and secularism. Gyan Pandey has noted the development of communalism in the 1920s as concurrent with the development of what he has termed 'pure' nationalism, 'unsullied, in theory, by the "primordial" pulls of caste, religious community etc.'.[5] The defining characteristic of this form of nationalism was its secularism —its perception of individuals only as citizens with equal, democratic rights, regardless of their religion or caste.

The paralleling of communalism and secularism in this way suggests an interesting proposition on the nature of secularism. As communalism has been described as a framework or structure that aligns the interests of a particular imagined community against the interests of others, so secularism may also be conceived of as a framework, a way of aligning the interests of the imagined nation against those of other—religiously configured—nations. As Bilgrami has noted:

For three decades before independence the Congress under Nehru refused to let a secular policy emerge through negotiation between different communal interests, by denying at every step in the various conferrings with the British, Jinnah's demand that the Muslim League represents the Muslims, a Sikh leader represents the Sikhs, and a harijan leader represents the untouchable community. And the ground for the denial was simply that as a secular party they could not accept that they did *not* represent *all* these communities.[6]

The idea of secularism, then, forms the framework of opposition. Through it, Indian nationalist ideology was aligned politically against the ideology of Muslim separatism, Sikh consciousness, low caste consciousness, and, one might add, Hindu nationalism. The actual ideologies themselves were not necessarily implacably opposed in this sense, but the imperative of the secularism versus communalism model demanded an oppositional stance. Interestingly, the opposition is expressed precisely in terms of representation; it revolved around the theoretical (or symbolic) question of who could represent who in the political arena of modern India. This model of how secularism and communalism operate as structural formations in the relationship of state and society perhaps allows for a clearer understanding of how seemingly oppositional ideologies appear to coexist operationally in political parties with an expectation of state power. Ideological 'purity' is not a necessity, because the contest for state power is based around these structural oppositions and how they are utilized by the various parties. One effective way of extending this analysis would be to examine the development of secularism as an ideology in Indian politics. This would require a further examination of the role of Hindu reformism in the development of national culture. The conceptual de-linking of reformism and Hindu nationalism which I have argued for has implications here. Does the transformative ideology of nineteenth-century reformism have more to contribute to representations of Indian secularism, after all, than to those of communalism?

Other than reformism, two further concepts have emerged from this study as significant in terms of the development of modern Hinduism. The first is *sangathan*. This concept has been examined very much in terms of its impact on the articulation of a specifically political Hinduism. There is evidence, however, that this articulation has had ramifications for the representation of Hinduism in contexts which are not, at least explicitly, political. This is particularly so as Hinduism has developed a self-conscious image of itself as a 'World Religion', part of the global 'club' of great, universalizing religious traditions. Within this context, certain Hindus appear to be pursuing a somewhat familiar ideal. As

Klostermaier states at the end of his *Survey of Hinduism,* 'Hinduism is organising itself, it is articulating its own essentials, it is modernising, and it is carried by a great many people with strong faith. It would not be surprising to find Hinduism the dominant religion of the twenty-first century.'[7] Exploring the emergence of *sangathan,* and of the idea of a pan-Hindu identity, may help locate such developments more precisely in the context of post-colonial India.

The second concept is that of *sanatana dharma.* The appearance of this concept as a middle class signifier of orthodoxy in the late nineteenth-century has been demonstrated here. In the context of modern Hinduism, however, it has developed an indistinct, amorphous quality. Scholars of religion tend to marginalize it, either as simply another—and perhaps a more respectful, more 'Indian'—term for Hinduism[8] or alternatively as a universalizing signifier that has no real place in the complex reality of Hindu practice.[9] In both cases, *sanatana dharma* is perceived as an articulation that is rather unfocused, not signifying any particular set of beliefs or status. The relationship between this amorphous concept and the fixed meaning associated with the term in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries needs to be explored. The importance of *sanatana dharma* as orthodoxy, after all, has been demonstrated precisely in its position as a signifier in the context of colonial modernity. Does *sanatana dharma* as a universalizing signifier have a similar importance in a post-colonial context?

One of the principal reasons for bringing this study to a close at the end of the 1920s has been cited as the advantage gained in terms of the clarity of ideological trajectories and organizational strategies at this point. This nevertheless begs the question of how precisely these trajectories and strategies developed during the following, extremely dynamic, period of Indian politics. If there was, as I have stated, no ideological polarization during the 1920s, what was the influence of Hindu nationalist ideology within Congress in the years leading up to Independence? How far can this ideology be said to hold a congruent position in the representation of right and left wing politics within this forum? And from this, to what extent did Hindu nationalism as an ideology inform the position of the so-called 'Hindu traditionalists' who are represented as the core of the Congress right? These questions may be approached particularly from the point of view of the articulation of different communities as constituencies during the 1930s and 1940s.

A further implication related to the 1930s and 1940s concerns the development of the Hindu Mahasabha. The final section of Chapter 6 appears to consign the Mahasabha to a somewhat muted, unproductive

fate. Yet in the late 1930s it undoubtedly gained prominence under the leadership of V.D. Savarkar. This formidable politician and prolific ideologue demands further attention. How did his leadership of the Mahasabha and his development of the idea of *sangathan* impact upon politics during this period? As well as being the author of *Hindutva,* it has been noted that Savarkar had been a significant figure in the Indian nationalist movement and became a symbol of nationalist sacrifice after his transportation to the Andamans. This confluence of ideological positions makes him a particularly fascinating figure in the emergence of secular nationalism and communalism as symbolic opposites in the modern political arena.

The coexistence of ideologies is a point which has been noted in Chapter 6 as evident in the early development of the RSS. In a sense, this contradicts the image of the RSS as rigidly devoted to certain normative ideological positions. The initial rigidity of the RSS, I would say, is to be found in its organizational form, which enabled it to replicate itself in a singularly effective manner as a kind of 'organic' cultural order, immersed in local contexts across central, west, and north India. It is by following the logic of a Congress-inspired discourse of organization that this 'organic' growth became entrenched, allowing for the development of elite Hindu nationalist ideology and its alignment with other, non-elite, ideologies, in the arena of Indian politics.

The cultural trajectory of the RSS has, of course, since become increasingly involved in mainstream politics, and it is in this 're-entry' that the image of ideological rigidity emerges. The RSS is singular in national politics in that its strength is derived from its position in the decentred discourse of organization. It draws its resources from this discourse, launching them into the discourse of mainstream politics in the form of political parties—the Jan Sangh and the BJP. This singularity is signified by the continued presence of the headquarters of the RSS in Nagpur—making it perhaps the only self-proclaimed national organization of political significance not to base itself at the centre of state power, in New Delhi. This approach engendered problems which have been well illustrated by Jaffrelot in his analysis of the relationship between the RSS and the BJP.[10] Tension has repeatedly emerged in this relationship, as the BJP periodically attempts to divert attention away from the cultural objectives of the parent organization and towards more pragmatic policies of socio-economic populism; this is particularly evident after the 1998 elections, when the BJP finally assumed power at the centre at the head of a rather motley coalition. At the same time, the implication of leading BJP figures in corruption scandals, the breakdown of discipline in states

with BJP governments, and the sight of the national government continually compromised by the various agendas of its coalition partners has led to disillusionment amongst RSS cadres with the pitfalls of mainstream politics—this was hardly reconcilable with the ideal of Hindu *sangathan.*[11] In this sense, the ideological 'rigidity' which the RSS has displayed in national politics is more to do with the projection of ideals developed and sustained in the decentred discourse in this wider arena—an arena still dominated by the power of symbolic representation.

Significantly, Jaffrelot concludes his book by reiterating the strength of RSS organization at an 'organic' level, looking at the development of social welfare and educational programmes—areas where state provision is still relatively weak. 'This trend,' he says, 'could help...to crystallize a Hindu nationalist identity which in the long term could challenge the durability of India's multi-cultural society.'[12] The operation of Hindu nationalism in this area, away from the limelight of state power, is precisely directed towards the achievement of the ideal of *sangathan*—a consolidated, catholic Hindu culture, in which personal religious and caste identities are subordinated to the greater good of *Bharat Mata.* Identification with non-Hindu cultures (religious or otherwise) in this paradigm implies the acceptance by the adherents of such cultures of the position of second class citizen in the Hindu nation.

Challenging the ideal of *sangathan* means engaging the ideology of Hindu nationalism on this decentred, localized discursive plane, where cultural and religious identities are formed and sustained. Periodically in this study it has been illustrated that, ideologically, the one position which Hindu nationalism has been unable to situate or accommodate fully is that of low caste consciousness. Here, the idea of a composite, horizontal organization of Hinduism has been repeatedly challenged by the assertion of autonomous indigenous cultures which have refused to accept these parameters. Identity politics associated with these cultures continue to emerge as significant formations, developing in local contexts but producing ramifications in national politics.[13] The impact of such formations is felt precisely because of their distance from the discourses of elite-led politics. Unlike both Hindu and Indian nationalism, the dominant ideology of low caste consciousness has emerged from a non-middle-class social bloc. The development of a coherent movement on this basis appears as the most credible and effective trajectory of resistance to the continuing entrenchment of elite-led Hindu nationalist identity as a force in Indian politics.

Notes

1. In Indra Prakash, *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha,* written in 1938, the following organizations are listed as representative of Hindu nationalist objectives: the Hindu Youth movement, the *shuddhi* movement, the Bhonsala Military School, the RSS, the cow protection movement, and the Hindu Seva Ashram. Other 'institutions, associations, missions, samajas, ashramas etc.' are referred to, but not covered in the review: see pp. xv–xvi.
2. On the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, see C. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: the Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994); on the Ramakrishna Mission, see Radice (ed.), *Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism.*
3. Prakash, *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha,* pp. xv–xvi.
4. Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilize', p. 102.
5. See Pandey, *The Colonial Construction of Communalism,* p.235.
6. Bilgrami, 'Two Concepts of Secularism: Reason, Modernity and the Archimedean Ideal', in *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 29, no. 28, 9 July 1994, pp. 1749–61: p. 1754; this number includes a series of useful articles on secularism, modernity, and the state.
7. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism,* p. 413.
8. See, for example, Zaehner, *Hinduism* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966), p. 2: 'The Hindus themselves call their religion the sanatana dharma.'
9. See Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices,* pp. 220–21: 'I have yet to discover a Hindu sanatana-dharma in the sense of some universally recognized philosophy, teaching or code of practice. Indeed, there can be no such thing, for it presupposes that Hinduism is a monolithic tradition in which there is agreement about some static, universal doctrine. But...Hinduism is a pluriform phenomenon in which there are many dynamic centres of religious belief and practice.'
10. See Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* esp. Chapter 9, pp. 314–37, Chapter 13, pp. 449–81, and also pp. 547–9; see also Jaffrelot, 'The BJP and the 1996 Elections', in Hansen and Jaffrelot (eds), *BJP and the Compulsions of Indian Politics,* (Ooxford University Press, Delhi, 1998).
11. For an overview of RSS–BJP tension, see the series of articles in *Frontline,* vol. 16, no. 4, 13–26 February 1999, and the article 'At Daggers Drawn' by H. Baweja in *India Today,* 15 February 1999. The BJP in government is here reported to be 'beleagured by its own ideological mentors and organizational gatekeepers [i.e. the RSS]'. After some high level resignations over the influence of the Sangh Parivar (most notably Madan

Lal Khurana in January 1999), the BJP has felt the need to make a pledge to its coalition partners that it will make 'every effort to ensure that the prestige and cohesiveness of the coalition are not diluted by organizations belonging to its ideological fraternity'.

12. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India,* p. 532.
13. This point has recently been demonstrated in A. Wyatt, 'Dalit Christianity and Identity Politics in India', in *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars,* vol. 30, no. 4, 1998, pp. 16–23. Here, the organization of dalit consciousness is presented as 'positive' identity politics, a way of discursively countering the 'negative' identity politics of communalism.

Glossary of Indian Terms

adharma: against order or moral law, vice
adivasi: original inhabitant; tribal
advaita: 'non-duality' i.e the monistic school of Vedanta;
exponent: Shankara.
ashrama: 4 stages of life: student, householder, hermit/recluse, ascetic;
also a religious retreat *(ashram)*
atman: eternal self, 'soul' (obverse of *Brahman*)
atmashuddhi: purification of the soul

bhakti: devotion
baudhik: RSS intellectual training classes—regular part of *shakha* activity
baudhik pramukh: RSS chief ideologue
bhagwa dhwaj: saffron flag: the 'guru' of the RSS
Brahman (Brahma): Ultimate reality or oneness of universe; the supreme spiritual being

dharma: Moral law which sustains the world, human society and the individual— a non-static concept
Dharma Shastra: Text that codifies sacred law

ekchalak anuvartita: 'following one leader': the core idea of RSS discipline

gaurakshini: cow protection.
Gayatri: The most sacred verse of the Rig-Veda, repeated daily by Brahmans (the *Gayatri mantra*)

gurukul: educational institution/movement based on study of the Vedas and promotion of *varnashrama dharma;* associated particularly with Swami Shraddhanand

jati: Community, caste, (later) race/nation
jati-vyavastha: Caste system as it exists today (i.e. not *varna vyavastha*)

kaliyuga: age of strife, the last period in each *kalpa,* or world era equivalent to one day of Brahma (432 million years)
karma: 'doing'—deeds, action, work—result or fruit of work, produced by the law of cause and effect

Manu Smriti: Lawbook of Manu; versified code explaining *dharma*
matha: monastic establishment
maya: deceptiveness, illusion
moksha: release from *samsara*

panchayat: 'council of five'; the traditional caste or village authority
pandit: Brahman teacher; learned man
pitribhu: Ancestral/father land
prachar pramukh: RSS chief organizer
pracharak: preacher; full-time RSS cadres
pramukh: instructor and leader
punyabhu: holy land

rashtriya: national
rayat: peasant, cultivator

sampradaya: literally, 'what is handed over'; a religious tradition founded by a sage or saint, extant in a religious Order. In modern Hinduism it has also come to mean religion itself, as in 'Hindu-*sampradaya*'
samsara: cycle of rebirth
sanatana dharma: the eternal dharma, sometimes used instead of 'Hinduism'; nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: orthodoxy
sangathan: organization; to be organized
sannyasa: renunciation; fourth *ashrama*
sarkaryavachak: RSS general secretary
sarsanghchalak: RSS Supreme leader
sat: The ordered universe in the Rig Veda; existence
satya: Performance of duty in accordance with *dharma*, bringing about a state of harmony with *sat;* hence truth

shakha: RSS cell/meeting of cell
Shankara: philosopher and commentator on texts, inc. Vedanta Sutras. Main influence in establishing predominance of Vedanta
shruti: revelation, as found in the Vedas
shuddhi: purification, (re-)conversion
amriti: Tradition, as in interpretation or codification of *Shruti.*
swadeshi: 'of one's own country'; indigenous production
swadharma: an individual's own specific social obligations
swaraj: freedom, independence
swayamsevak: volunteer

Vaishnava: Devotee of Vishnu
varna: Literally 'appearance', 'colour'; the four socio-religious orders or classes: Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra
varnashramadharma: the ordained duties of the four classes and the four stages of life
varna-vyavastha: varna system
Vedanta: 'End of the Vedas', i.e. Upanishads
Vijaya Dashami: Indian festival; celebrated by RSS—Ram's victory over Ravana; occasion supposedly chosen by Hedgewar for founding of the Sangh in 1925
vyavastha: system, order, arrangement; also ruling or judgement

yuga: era, age; hence *yugadharma,* moral law and way of being appropriate to the era

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John Zavos is Lecturer in South Asian Studies at University of Manchester, UK.

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ISBN 0195658887-6

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